

THE
LETTERS
OF
SIR WILLIAM JONES.
VOL. III.



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LETTERS

OF

SIR WILLIAM JONES,

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VOL. II.

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SIR WILLIAM JONES'S
LETTERS.

LXXI.

To the Bishop of St. Asaph.

MY LORD,

November 23, 1780.

HAD I not been prevented by particular business from writing to your lordship on Tuesday evening and yesterday, I would have informed you before, that we had done ourselves the honour (and a very great one we shall ever esteem it) of electing your lordship a member of our club : * the election,

* Generally known by the name of the "Turk's Head Club," held in Gerrard-street, Soho. The establishment of this club was first proposed by sir Joshua Reynolds to Burke and Johnson, and the original members of it were the friends of these three : the number of members was gradually increased to forty—comprehending men of the most distinguished characters, and eminent for their learning, talents, and abilities.

of course, was unanimous ; and it was carried with the sincere approbation and eagerness of all present. I am sorry to add, that lord Camden and the bishop of Chester were rejected. When bishops and chancellors honour us by offering to dine with us at a tavern, it seems very extraordinary that we should ever reject such an offer ; but there is no reasoning on the caprice of men. Of our club I will only say, that there is no branch of human knowledge, on which some of our members are not capable of giving information ; and, I trust, that as the honour will be ours, so your lordship will receive some pleasure from the company, once a fortnight, of some of our first writers and critics, as well as our most virtuous senators and accomplished men. I think myself highly honoured in having been a member of this society near ten years, and chiefly in having contributed to add such names to the number of our friends as those of your lordship and lord Althorpe. I spoke yesterday in Westminster Hall for two hours and a half, on a knotty point of law ; and this morning, for above an hour, on a very interesting public question : to-morrow I must argue a great cause, and am, therefore, obliged to conclude, with assuring your lordship, that I am, with the highest, &c.

W. JONES.

LXXII.

From the Bishop of St. Asaph.

DEAR SIR,

November 27.

You was prevented by sir Joshua Reynolds in your kind intentions of giving me the earliest notice of the honour you have done me. I believe Mr. Fox will allow me to say, that the honour of being elected into the Turk's Head Club is not inferior to that of being the representative of Westminster or Surrey: the electors are certainly more disinterested; and I should say they were much better judges of merit, if they had not rejected lord Camden, and chosen me. I flatter myself with the hopes of great pleasure and improvement in such a society as you describe, which, indeed, is the only club of which I ever wished myself a member.

Though I am much flattered with hearing from you, I was delighted with the cause of your delaying to write. Your talents have found means, by their own weight, to open the way to public notice and employment, which could not long be shut against them. Your pleadings for the *nephew* against the *daughter* promise something very curious in the particulars of the case, which seems to call for great abilities to defend it.

I would not neglect the first opportunity of an-

swering your very obliging letter, though, it being early post day, I am forced to write in a greater hurry than I could wish. I am, &c.

J. ST. A.

* * * * *

LXXIII.

To the Rev. Edmund Cartwright.

DEAR SIR,

May 1, 1781.

I TAKE the liberty to send you (as my Arabian Poets are not yet ready to wait upon you) a paraphrase of a Greek fragment, which came into my head this spring in my way to Wales. I make no doubt of your continuing to cultivate the Muses, by whom you are so highly favoured, and hope you will from time to time transmit the fruit of their favours to, &c.

WILLIAM JONES.

LXXIV.

From the Bishop of St. Asaph.

DEAR SIR,

May 28, 1781.

You have my best and earliest thanks for your ode in the true Grecian taste and spirit. I remember to have seen a fragment of Alcæus, but I cannot find it in Aristides, of whom I have only Cantern's small edition: the seed you have found there, you have quickened, by the warmth of true genius, into a noble production. I cannot help observing, that Alcæus, like other good poets and patriots, was condemned for life to be in the minority.

I am, &c.

J. ST. ASAPH.

I hope you will not forget, that when you have leisure, your friends at Twyford will be very happy to see you.

LXXV.

From Mr. Burke.

I do not know how I can justify myself in the liberty I take with you; but, confiding in your humanity and condescension, I beg, if you have leisure for it, that you would be so kind as to breakfast with me, and assist me with your opinion and advice on the conduct of the Bengal Bill. The natives of the East, to whose literature you have done so much justice, are particularly under your protection for their rights. I have the honour to be, with the highest esteem and regard, dear sir, your most faithful and obedient humble servant,

EDMUND BURKE.

LXXVI.

To Mr. Gibbon.

DEAR SIR,

Lamb's Buildings, June 30, 1781.

I HAVE more than once sought, without having been so fortunate as to obtain, a proper opportunity of thanking you very sincerely for the elegant compliment which you pay me, in a work abounding in elegance of all kinds.

My Seven Arabian Poets will see the light before next winter, and be proud to wait upon you in their English dress: their wild productions will, I flatter myself, be thought interesting, and not venerable merely on account of their antiquity.*

In the mean while, let me request you to honour me with accepting a copy of a law tract, which is not yet published: the subject is so generally important, that I make no apology for sending you a professional work.

You must pardon my inveterate hatred of C. Octavianus, basely surnamed Augustus. I feel myself unable to forgive the death of Cicero, which, if he

* After an interval of about six years, we find Mr. Jones retracing his favourite haunts with the Arabian Muses. He had devoted his leisure hours of the winter of 1780 to complete a translation of seven ancient poems of the highest repute in Arabia.

did not promote, he might have prevented. Besides, even Mæcenæ knew the cruelty of his disposition, and ventured to reproach him with it. In short, I have not Christian charity for him.

With regard to Asiatic letters, a necessary attention to my profession will compel me wholly and eternally to abandon them, unless lord North (to whom I am already under no small obligation), should think me worthy to concur in the improved administration of justice in Bengal, and should appoint me to supply the vacancy on the India bench. Were that appointment to take place this year, I should probably travel, for speed, through part of Egypt and Arabia, and should be able, in my way, to procure many Eastern tracts of literature and jurisprudence : I might become a good Mohammedan lawyer before I reached Calcutta ; and, in my vacations, should find leisure to explain, in my native language, whatever the Arabs, Persians, and Turks, have written on science, history, and the fine arts.

My happiness by no means depends on obtaining this appointment, as I am in easy circumstances without my profession, and have flattering prospects in it ; but if the present summer and the ensuing autumn elapse without my receiving any answer, favourable or unfavourable, I shall be forced to consider that silence as a polite refusal ; and, having given sincere thanks for past favours, shall entirely drop all thoughts of Asia, and, “ deep as ever plummet sounded, shall drown my Persian books.” If my politics have given offence, it would be manly in ministers to tell me so. I shall never be personally hostile to them, nor enlist

under party banners of any colour; but I will never resign my opinions for interest, though I would cheerfully abandon them on conviction. My reason, such as it is, can only be controlled by better reason, to which I am ever open. As to my freedom of thought, speech, and action, I shall ever say, what Charles XII. wrote under the map of Riga: "Dieu me l'a donné; le diable ne me l'ôtera pas." But the fair answer to this objection is, that my system is purely speculative, and has no relation to my seat on the bench in India, where I should hardly think of instructing the Gentoos in the maxims of the Athenians. I believe, I should not have troubled you with this letter, if I did not fear that your attendance in parliament might deprive me of the pleasure of meeting you at the club next Tuesday; and I shall go to Oxford a few days after. At all times, and in all places, I shall ever be, with undissembled regard, dear sir,

Your much obliged and faithful servant,

W. JONES.

LXXVII.

*To H. A. Schultens.**

June, 1781.

You are not ignorant of my sentiments on this most abominable war: the enclosed imitation of an ode of Alcæus will clearly prove my detestation of tyranny—my zeal and exertions in the cause of liberty. Literature, which is, and ought to be, ever connected with humanity, will never, I trust, be degraded by a fratricidal war between the learned, particularly those who pursue the same studies. Do you, therefore, though a native of Holland, preserve that affection for me, which I, an Englishman, have, and shall ever retain for you.

I have translated into English, without the omission of a single line, the seven *suspended* poems of our Arabs, and mean to publish the whole with notes, and a dissertation on the ancient monuments of Arabia, in the next summer vacation.

I possess the Commentary of Tabrizi; and I have been obligingly furnished from Trinity College, Cambridge, with the Paraphrase of Zouzini, and his short and excellent notes. At Oxford, we

* Written in Latin.

have the notes and Persic version of Sadi, the Scholia of Ansari, and the fine edition of Obeidolla; but I am anxious to inspect all editions and commentaries. Your illustrious grandfather, for whose memory, as in duty bound, I preserve the greatest respect, pronounces these poems worthy of immortality; and says, if I do not mistake, that he transcribed the manuscript of Nahasi, at Leyden, for his own use. I also observed in the copious catalogue of the Schultensian library (one copy of which I delivered to my friend Hunter), these words: "6990. The seven Moallakat Arabic, most beautifully written." Has this been purchased by any one? at what price will it be disposed of? I lament that I did not buy it; but being tied up at that time myself, by various important occupations, I could not bestow a thought on the suspended poems.

Assist me, I beseech you, in the name of the Muses, with materials for perfecting my work; collect from your stores any notes, or various readings which you may possess, and communicate them to me. I have mentioned, in my preliminary discourse, your Philarabic family,* and have more to say about it both true and honourable. I wish particularly to know, whether any of the seven poems, excepting those of Amr'alkeis and 'Tarafa, will be published in Holland. You shall receive

* Albert Schultens, the grandfather, and J. J. Schultens, the father of the person to whom this letter is addressed, were both distinguished for their knowledge of Oriental, particularly Arabic, literature.

my book, which will be elegantly bound by Baumgarten.

My mother, whom I most tenderly loved, was ever, in my opinion, the best of women; I trust she is now the happiest: but my affliction for her loss is inconsolable. I shall be most happy to hear that you and your wife are well, and the early gratification of my wishes will be an additional pleasure.

LXXVIII.

From the Bishop of St. Asaph.

DEAR SIR,

Nov. 3, 1781.

A LETTER from you is always welcome, come sooner or later; yet, I cannot help rejoicing at that ceaseless hurry of business, which occasioned your delay in writing, and made me lose a very valuable visit. Riches and reputation, after showing a little coyness at first, are now making their advances at a very great rate, and will soon be as lavish of their charms as you could wish; yet I know you think too liberally, to let either your friends or your liberty suffer by engrossing you too much.

I thank you for the nuptial ode, which, notwithstanding its incorrectness, which you need not complain of, is the most genuine imitation of Pin-

dar I have ever seen. I don't know whether I can assent to your criticism on the word *replete*, that it is never used in a good sense. Were it left to me, I would use it in no sense. It has but little meaning. It was never naturalised in conversation or in prose; and, I think, makes no figure in verse.

I have another present of value to thank you for—your Essay on the Law of Bailments. To own the truth, your name to the advertisement made me impatient; and I had sent for it, and read it before. It appears to me to be clear, just, and accurate—I mean as clear as the subject will permit. My want of law language, and perhaps of legal understanding, made me feel great difficulty in following you through your very ingenious distinctions and consequences, of which I thought I could perceive the solidity. I foretell that this will be your last work. For the future, your business and the public will allow you to write no more.

Though I fear it will not be consistent with your employment in Westminster Hall, I cannot help telling you, that, for as many days as you can spare between this time and the meeting of parliament, you will find a warm bed, and a hearty welcome at Chilbolton. Mrs. Shipley and her daughters desire their compliments, and join in the invitation.

I am, &c.

J. ST. ASAPH.

LXXIX.

To the Rev. Edmund Cartwright.

DEAR SIR,

Dec. 20, 1781.

SINCE I received your obliging letter, an interval of six months has elapsed ; but in all that interval, I have either been deeply engaged in professional labours, or confined by illness : I have enjoyed no rest. At this moment I am slowly recovering from a severe inflammatory disorder : yet your letter, and your fine sonnets, have remained constantly on my mind, and I now take up my pen to thank you most warmly for the pleasure which they have given me. I hope my friend Watson has seen the noble wreath of laurel which your animated Muse has woven for him : I entreat you to send me the two others, which I long to see. The few copies which were printed of the Latin ode, are so dispersed, that I have not one for myself, and would print a few more, if a learned friend of mine had not engaged to publish it with notes historical and critical, for want of which it is in some parts obscure. You may depend on receiving one of the first copies that can see the light ; and my seven Arabian poets will wait upon you as soon as the European dresses are finished. I take the liberty to enclose an ode

composed without preparation, and almost without any premeditation : it is the work of a few hours. In truth, when I attended the wedding, I had no thought of writing ; but the young ladies would not hear of an excuse : you must therefore make all due allowance for poetry by compulsion.

I am, &c.

LXXX.

To Lord Althorpe.

January 5, 1782.

O la bella cosa il far niente ! This was my exclamation, my dear lord, on the 12th of last month, when I found myself, as I thought, at liberty to be a rambler, or an idler, or any thing I pleased : but but my *mal di gola* took ample revenge for my abuse and contempt of it, when I wrote to you, by confining me twelve days with a fever and quinsy ; and I am now so cramped by the approaching session at Oxford, that I cannot make any long excursion. I enclose my tragical song of “ A Shepherdess going,” with Mazzanti’s music, of which my opinion at present is, that the modulation is very artificial, and the harmony good ; but that Pergolesi (whom the modern Italians are such puppies as to undervalue) would have made it more pathetic and *heart-rending*, if I may compose such a word : I long to

hear it sung by Mrs. Poyntz. Pray present the enclosed, in my name, to lady Althorpe. I hope that I shall, in a short time, be able to think of you, when I read these charming lines of Catullus :*

And soon, to be completely blest,
 Soon may a young Torquatus rise ;
 Who, hanging on his mother's breast,
 To his known sire shall turn his eyes ;
 Outstretch his infant arms awhile ;
 Half ope his little lips, and smile.—(*Translation.*)

What a beautiful picture ! can Dominichino equal it ? How weak are all arts in comparison of poetry and rhetoric ! Instead, however, of Torquatus, I would read Spencerus. Do you not think that I have discovered the true use of the fine arts—namely, in relaxing the mind after toil ? Man was born for labour ; his configuration, his passions, his restlessness, all prove it ; but labour would wear him out, and the purpose of it be defeated, if he had not intervals of pleasure ; and unless that pleasure be innocent, both he and society must suffer. Now, what pleasures are more harmless, if they be nothing else, than those afforded by polite arts, and polite literature ? Love was given us by the Author of our being, as the reward of virtue, and the solace of care ; but the base and sordid

* The original is quoted by Mr. Jones :—

Torquatus volo parvulus,
 Matris è gremio suæ,
 Porrigens teneras manus,
 Dulce rideat ad patrem,
 Semi-hiante labello.

forms of *artificial* (which I oppose to *natural*) society in which we live, have encircled that heavenly rose with so many thorns, that the wealthy alone can gather it with prudence. On the other hand, mere pleasure, to which the idle are not justly entitled, soon satiates, and leaves a vacuity in the mind, more unpleasant than actual pain. A just mixture, or interchange of labour and pleasures, appears alone conducive to such happiness as this life affords.—Farewell. I have no room to add my useless name, and still more useless professions of friendship.

LXXXI.

To Mr. Thomas Yeates.

SIR,

Lamb's Buildings, April 25, 1782.

It was not till within these very few days, that I received, on my return from the circuit, your obliging letter, dated the 18th of March, which, had I been so fortunate as to receive earlier, I should have made a point of answering immediately. The Society for Constitutional Information, by electing me one of their members, will confer upon me an honour, which I am wholly unconscious of deserving, but which is so flattering to me, that I accept of their offer with pleasure and

gratitude. I should indeed long ago have testified my regard for so useful an institution, by an offer of my humble service in promoting it, if I had not really despaired, in my present situation, of being able to attend your meetings as often as I should ardently wish.

My future life shall certainly be devoted to the support of that excellent constitution, which it is the object of your society to unfold and elucidate; and from this resolution, long and deliberately made, no prospects, no connexions, no station here or abroad, no fear of danger, or hope of advantage to myself, shall ever deter or allure me.

A form of government so apparently conducive to the true happiness of the community, must be admired as soon as it is understood; and if reason and virtue have any influence in human breasts, ought to be preserved by any exertions, and at any hazard. Care must now be taken, lest, by reducing the regal power to its just level, we raise the aristocratical to a dangerous height; since it is from the people that we can deduce the obligation of our laws, and the authority of magistrates.

On the people depend the welfare, the security, and the permanence of every legal government; in the people must reside all substantial power; and to the people must all those, in whose ability and knowledge we sometimes wisely, often imprudently confide, be always accountable for the due exercise of that power with which they are for a time intrusted.

If the properties of all good government be considered as duly distributed in the different parts of

our limited republic, goodness ought to be the distinguished attribute of the crown, wisdom of the aristocracy, but power and fortitude of the people.

May justice and humanity prevail in them all !
I am, sir, your very faithful and obedient servant,

W. JONES.

LXXXII.

To Mr. Thomas Yeates.

SIR, Lamb's Buildings, Temple, June 7, 1782.

I LATELY met with some dangerous doctrine concerning the constitution of England, in the works of an admired English writer : the doctrine is so dangerous, that an immediate confutation of it seems highly necessary ; and the writer so admired, that his opinions, good or bad, must naturally have a very general influence. It was the opinion, in short, of the late ingenious Henry Fielding, that “ the constitution of this island was nothing fixed, but just as variable as its weather ;” and he treats the contrary notion as a ridiculous error : now, if this doctrine be well founded, our society will soon, I imagine, think it wise to dissolve themselves ; since it is hardly consistent with the gravity of sensible men, to collect and impart information, like the makers of almanacks, upon any thing so

uncertain as the weather : if, on the other hand, the error be palpably on the side of Mr. Fielding, you will not only proceed with assiduity in your laudable design of rendering our constitution universally known, but will be at least equal, in usefulness and true dignity, to any society that ever was formed. His words are these, in the preface to his tract, *On the Increase of Robberies*, dedicated to Lord Chancellor Hardwicke : “ There is nothing so much talked of, and so little understood, in this country, as the constitution. It is a word in the mouth of every man : and yet when we come to discourse of the matter, there is no subject on which our ideas are more confused and perplexed. Some, when they speak of the constitution, confine their notions to the law ; others, to the legislature ; others again, to the governing or executive part ; and many there are who jumble all these together in one idea. One error, however, is common to them all : for all seem to have the conception of something uniform and permanent ; as if the constitution of England partook rather of the nature of the soil than the climate ; and was as fixed and constant as the former, not as changing and variable as the latter. Now, in this word, the constitution, are included the original and fundamental law of the kingdom, from whence all powers are derived, and by which they are circumscribed ; all legislative and executive authority ; all those municipal provisions, which are commonly called laws ; and lastly, the customs, manners, and habits of the people. These joined together, do, I apprehend, form the political, as the several members of the body, the animal economy, with the humours and

habit, compose that which is called the natural constitution."

He adds a paragraph or two of elegant, but idle allusions to the Platonic philosophy; as if we lived under the polity of Plato, not in the days of William the Norman. Now, of all words easy to be comprehended, the easiest, in my humble opinion, is the word constitution: it is the great system of public, in contradistinction to private and criminal law; and comprises all those articles which Blackstone arranges in his first volume, under the rights of persons, and of which he gives a perspicuous analysis. Whatever then relates to the rights of persons—either absolute rights, as the enjoyment of liberty, security, and property; or relative, that is, in the public relations of magistrates and people—makes a part of that majestic whole, which we properly call the constitution: of those magistrates, some are subordinate, and some supreme; as the legislative or parliament, which ought to consist of delegates from every independent voice in the nation; and the executive or the king, whose legal rights for the general good are called prerogative. The people are the aggregate body or community, and are in an ecclesiastical, civil, military, or maritime state.

This constitutional or public law is partly unwritten, and grounded upon immemorial usage; and partly written, or enacted by the legislative power: but the unwritten or common law contains the true spirit of our constitution; the written has often most unjustifiably altered the form of it: the common law is the collected wisdom of many centuries, having been used and approved by

successive generations ; but the statutes frequently contain the whims of a few leading men, and sometimes of the mere individuals employed to draw them : lastly, the unwritten law is eminently favourable, and the written generally, hostile to the absolute rights of persons.

But though this inestimable law be called unwritten, yet the only evidence of it is in writing preserved in the public records, judicial, official, and parliamentary, and explained in works of acknowledged authority. Positive acts of the legislature may indeed change the form of the constitution ; but as, in the system of private law, the narrowness or rigour of our forensic rules may be enlarged or softened by the interposition of parliament ; (for our courts of equity are wholly of a different nature) so all legislative provisions, which oppose the spirit of the constitution, may be corrected, agreeably to that very spirit, by the people or nation at large, who form, as it were, the high court of appeal in cases of constitutional equity ; and their sense must be collected from the petitions which they present, expressed with moderation and respect, yet with all the firmness which their cause justifies, and all the dignity which truly becomes them. I am, sir,

Your very faithful humble servant,

W. JONES.

LXXXIII.

To the Bishop of St. Asaph.

MY LORD, Wimbledon Park, Sept. 13, 1782.

IF your lordship received my letter from Calais, you will not be much surprised to see the date of this, and the place where I now am writing, while lady Spencer is making morning visits. Mr. and Mrs. Poyntz have this instant left us. Lord Althorpe being in Northamptonshire, I must give myself some consolation for my disappointment in missing him, by scribbling a few lines to him, as soon as I have finished these with which I now trouble your lordship. My excursion to the United Provinces (which has been the substitute for my intended expedition to the United States), was extremely pleasing and improving to me. I returned last Monday; and finding all my friends dispersed in various parts of England, am going for a few days into Buckinghamshire, whence I shall go to Oxford, and must continue there till the sessions. Should your lordship be in Hampshire any time in October, and should it be in all respects convenient to you, I will accept, this year, with great pleasure, the obliging invitation to Chilbolton, which I was unfortunately prevented from accepting last year. I

lament the unhappy disensions among our great men, and clearly see the vanity of my anxious wish, that they would have played in tune some time longer in the political concert.

The delays about the India judgeship have, it is true, greatly injured me ; but, with my patience and assiduity, I could easily recover my lost ground. I must, however, take the liberty here to allude to a most obliging letter of your lordship from Chilbolton, which I received so long ago as last November, but was prevented from answering till you came to town. It was inexpressibly flattering to me ; but my intimate knowledge of the nature of my profession, obliges me to assure you, that it requires the whole man, and admits of no concurrent pursuits : that, consequently, I must either give it up, or it will engross me so much, that I shall not, for some years, be able to enjoy the society of my friends, or the sweets of liberty. Whether it be a wise part to live uncomfortably, in order to die wealthy, is another question ; but this I know by experience, and have heard old practitioners make the same observation—that a lawyer who is in earnest, must be chained to his chambers and the bar for ten or twelve years together. In regard to your lordship's indulgent and flattering prediction, that my Essay on Bailment would be my last work, and that, for the future, business and the public would allow me to write no more, I doubt whether it will be accomplished, whatever may be my practice or situation : for I have already prepared many tracts on jurisprudence ; and when I see the volumes written by Lord Coke, whose annual gains were twelve or fourteen thousand pounds ; by Lord Bacon,

sir Matthew Hale, and a number of judges and chancellors ; I cannot think that I should be hurt in my professional career, by publishing now and then a law tract upon some interesting branch of the science ; and the science itself is indeed so complex, that, without writing, which is the chain of memory, it is impossible to remember a thousandth part of what we read or hear : since it is my wish therefore to become in time as great a lawyer as Sulpicius, I shall probably leave as many volumes of my works as he is said to have written. As to politics, I begin to think, that the natural propensity of men to dissent from one another, will prevent them, in a corrupt age, from uniting in any laudable design ; and, at present, I have nothing to do but to rest on my oars, which the Greek philosophers, I believe, called *επεχειν*, a word which Cicero applies, in one of his letters, to the same subject.

My best respects to the ladies ; for whom I would certainly have brought some Virginian nightingales, if my western expedition had taken place ; since I was informed by the captain, with whom I should have sailed, that they might have been kept in the cabin without any danger.

LXXXIV.

To Mr. Baron Eyre.

DEAR SIR,

Oct 2, 1782.

I HAVE been in England about a fortnight, and was made happy by learning in John-street, that you had long been restored to health from the illness which confined you, to my inexpressible concern, at the time when I set out for the continent. The cause of my return is, in a few words, this : I ought to have foreseen, what I nevertheless did not expect ; that the same timidity or imbecillity, which made my unhappy friend declare, that he neither could nor would go to Virginia without me, would make him declare, when he saw the sails and the waves, that he neither would nor could go at all. A dread of some imaginary danger so enervated him, that he kept his bed, and wrote me word, that if he stayed a week longer at Nantes, he should lose his reason or his life. My expostulations had some little effect ; but there was no dependence, I found, on a man who had none, he confessed, upon himself ; and when I discovered, that no ship, with even tolerable accommodation, would sail till September, so that I could not keep my word with my friends in England, by returning from America before the new year, I came back through Normandy about the middle of August, and having

a few weeks to spare, made a very pleasant and improving excursion into Holland, which I traversed from south to north. The detail of my expedition may not perhaps be unentertaining to you, when I have the pleasure of conversing with you at your leisure; and I am not without hope of enjoying that pleasure, if you continue at Ruscombe, before the term begins. I stay here till the sessions are over; and would immediately after take my chance of finding you in Berkshire, but am called upon to keep an old promise of visiting the bishop of St. Asaph near Andover, and must spend a day or two with my friend Poyntz. I can easily conceive how little time you can have to write letters; yet if you could find a moment to let me know how long you propose to remain in the country, I would not be in your neighbourhood without paying my respects to you, and I would indeed have taken Ruscombe in my way to Oxford, if I had not been engaged to make a visit in Buckinghamshire. As to myself, I find such distraction among my political friends, that I should be glad (if I had no other motive) to be fixed in India, at the distance of 16,000 miles from all their animosities: but I am unhappily more unsettled than ever; for * * * * writes me word, that he has nothing more at heart than to open some situation for me in India. What this means, I know not; but it looks like some new plan, which may probably hang undecided from session to session. On the whole, I greatly fear that it would have been happy for me, and perhaps for millions, if India had never existed, or if we had known as little of it as of Japan.

LXXXV.

To Lord Althorpe.

MY DEAR LORD,

Oct. 5, 1782.

YOUR friendly letter caught me in Buckinghamshire, before I came to college, where I have been for some days sole governor, and almost sole inhabitant of Alfred's peaceful mansion, till Mr. Windham surprised me agreeably, by coming with a design of passing some time in this academical retreat. You, in the mean while, are taking healthful and pleasing exercise in Norfolk, where Mr. Fox, I understand, is also shooting partridges; and you are both ready, no doubt, to turn your firelocks against the Dutch, should they make their appearance in your fields: when I was in Zealand, they expected us; and if they stand upon the ceremony of the first visit, we shall not, I imagine, meet very soon.

In regard to my expectation of seeing a little good attained for our miserable country, I am not apt to be sanguine, but rather inclined to fear the worst than to expect the best, I rejoice, however, at the distrust conceived, by many honest men, of those now in power: my opinion is, that power should always be distrusted, in whatever hands it is placed. As to America, I know not what * * * * * thinks: but this I know; that the sturdy Trans-

Atlantic yeomanry will neither be dragooned nor bamboozled out of their liberty. His principles in regard to our internal government are, unless I am deluded by his professions, such as my reason approves; and, which is better, such as I know to be approved in clear terms by our recorded constitution. The friends of * * * * * were too monarchical, and those of * * * * * far too aristocratical for me; and if it were possible to see an administration too democratical, I should equally dislike it. There must be a mixture of all the powers, in due proportions weighed and measured by the laws, or the nation cannot exist without misery or shame. I may write all this consistently with good manners and with friendship, because I know the excellence of your understanding and soundness of your principles; and, independently of my presumption that all your actions must be wise and just, I see and applaud the motive which must have induced you to resign an office, which you were not at first much inclined to accept. I am confident also, that you would as little endure a Swedish monarchy, as a Venetian aristocracy. I enclose a little *jeu d'esprit*,* which I wrote at Paris: it was printed here by a society, who, if they will steer clear of party, will do more good to Britain than all the philosophers and antiquaries of Somerset House. But to speak the truth, I greatly doubt, whether they, or any other men in this country, can do it substantial good. The nation, as Demosthenes said, will be

* The *jeu d'esprit* mentioned here, was a Dialogue between a Farmer and Country Gentleman, on the Principles of Government.

fed like a consumptive patient, with chicken broth and panada, which will neither suffer him to expire, nor keep him wholly alive. As to myself, if my friends are resolved to assail one another, instead of concurring in any great and laudable effort for the general safety, I have no course left, but to act and speak rightly to the best of my understanding; but I have an additional motive for wishing to obtain an office in India, where I might have some prospect of contributing to the happiness of millions, or at least of alleviating their misery; and serving my country essentially, whilst I benefited my fellow-creatures.

When the sessions are over, I shall hasten to Chilbolton, and perform an old promise of passing a few days with the best of bishops; after which I shall take Midgham, and Baron Eyre's at Ruscombe, in my way to London, where I must be at the beginning of the term. A Persian book is just printed here, said to have been composed by Tamerlane, who confesses, that he governed men by four great arts—bribing, dividing, amusing, and keeping in suspense. How far it may be an object with modern Tamerlanes, or sultans of India, to govern me, I cannot tell; but as I cannot be bribed, without losing my senses, nor divided, without losing my life, I will neither be amused, nor kept long in suspense; and, indeed, I have so high an opinion of Lord Ashburton, who never professes more than he means, that I do not suspect any artifice in that business.

LXXXVI.

To Lady Spencer.

MADAM,

Chilbolton, Oct. 21, 1782.

THOUGH I wrote so lately to your ladyship, and cannot hope, by any thing I can now say, to make amends for the dulness of my last letter; yet, as some of the ladies here are this moment writing to St. James's Place, I cannot prevail on myself to decline joining so agreeable a party, especially as the very favourable accounts which were last night received of lord Spencer's health have given me spirits, and made me eager to offer my sincere congratulations. Yes; I rejoice with the truest sincerity, that his lordship's health is so likely to be re-established; for I cannot name a man of rank in the nation, in whose health, the public and all mankind, as well as his family and friends, are more truly interested. I have passed my time at Chilbolton so agreeably, that ten days have appeared like one; and it gives me concern, that the near approach of the term will oblige me to leave so charming and improving a society at the end of this week; after which I shall hope to find my friends at Midgham in perfect health; and then farewell, a long farewell to all my rational and interesting pleasures, which must be succeeded by the drudgery of drawing bills

in equity, the toil of answering cases, the squabbles of the bar, and the more vexatious dissensions and conflicts of the political world, which I vainly deprecated, and now as vainly deplore. How happy would it be, if statesmen had more music in their souls, and could bring themselves to consider, that what harmony is in a concert, such is union in a state : but in the great orchestra of politics, I find so many musicians out of humour, and instruments out of tune, that I am more tormented by such dissonance than the man in Hogarth's print, and am more desirous than ever of being transported to the distance of five thousand leagues from all this fatal discord. Without a metaphor, I lament with anguish the bitterness and animosity with which some of my friends have been assailing others ; as if empty altercation could be the means of procuring any good to this afflicted country. I find myself, in more instances than one, like poor Petrarch, wishing to pass my days

Fra' magnanimi pochi; à chi 'l ben piace,
Di lor chi m' assicura ?
Io vo gridando *pace, pace, pace.*

—but I shall not be heard, and must console myself with the pleasing hope, that your ladyship, and the few friends of virtue and humanity, will agree in this sentiment with, &c.

WILLIAM JONES.

LXXXVII.

From the Duchess of Devonshire.

MY DEAR MR. JONES, Plimton, Oct. 28, 1782.

I AM very happy that the fear of losing a privilege, which you are so good as to say is precious to you, has induced you to write to me ; for I assure you, that your letters give me very great pleasure, and that they, as well as the few times in which we meet, make me regret very much that the turn of your public engagements takes you so much from societies where you are wished for.

I agree with you, that the political world is strangely torn. If you had been in parliament at this crisis, you would have felt yourself in an uncomfortable situation, I confess ; but I cannot think, that with the good Whig principles you are blessed with, private friendships or connexions would have prevailed on you to remain silent or inactive.

Chi vuol Catone amico,
Facilmente l' avrà : Sia fido a Roma.

This I think would have been the test of your political friendship.

I am rejoiced that there is a chance of your returning to poetry. I had a very valuable present made me by Dr. Blagden, physician to the camp, of your ode in imitation of Callistratus. I wish I understood Greek, that I might read something Mr. Paradise has written at the top of it. I will attempt to copy it; and after the various characters I have, in days of yore, seen you decipher, I will not despair of your making out Greek, though written by me.

*Αἱ Χάριτες, τεμενος τι λαβεῖν ὅπερ οὐκί πεσειη
Ζητῶσαι, ψυχὴν εὐρον Ἰωνιονου.**

I shall expect to see the poem something sooner than the rest of your friends; and, I assure you, the having so seldom the pleasure of meeting you, does not diminish the sincerity with which I shall ever retain that title.—If you are still at Chilbolton, pray give my love to the family there, and tell Miss Shipley to write to me.

My seal is a talisman, which if you can send me the explanation of, I shall be much obliged to you.

* The Graces, seeking a shrine that would never decay, found the soul of Jones.

LXXXVIII.

*From Lord Ashburton.**

MY DEAR SIR,

March 3, 1783.

It is with little less satisfaction to myself than it can give you, that I send you the enclosed; and I do assure you, there are few events in which I could have felt so sensible a mortification, as in that of your finally missing this favourite object. The weather suggests to me, as no slight topic of congratulation, your being relieved from such a journey, and under such circumstances, as your last favour intimates you had in contemplation for Wednesday; but when I consider this appointment as securing to you at once, two of the first objects of human pursuit, those of ambition and love, I feel it a subject of very serious and cordial congratulation, which I desire you to accept, and to convey accordingly. I am, with every good wish, dear sir, your faithful humble servant,

ASHBURTON.

* Mr. Jones, through the influence of lord Ashburton, was appointed judge of the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William, in Bengal. When that appointment was conferred upon him, he received the honour of knighthood; and, shortly afterwards, married Anna Maria Shipley, eldest daughter of the bishop of St. Asaph.

LXXXIX.

From Dr. Franklin.

DEAR FRIEND,

Passy, March 17, 1783.

I DULY received your obliging letter of November 15th : you will have since learnt how much I was then, and have been continually engaged in public affairs, and your goodness will excuse my not having answered it sooner. You announced your intended marriage with my much respected friend Miss Anna Maria, which I assure you gave me great pleasure, as I cannot conceive a match more likely to be happy, from the amiable qualities each of you possess so plentifully. You mention its taking place as soon as a prudent attention to worldly interests would permit. I just now learn from Mr. Hodgson, that you are appointed to an honourable and profitable place in the Indies ; so I expect now soon to hear of the wedding, and to receive the profile. With the good bishop's permission, I will join my blessing with his ; adding my wishes that you may return from that corrupting country, with a great deal of money honestly acquired, and with full as much virtue as you carry out with you.

The engraving of my medal, which you know was projected before the peace, is but just finished :

none are yet struck in hard metal, but will in a few days. In the mean time, having this good opportunity by Mr. Penn, I send you one of the epreuves. You will see that I have profited by some of your ideas, and adopted the mottos you were so kind as to furnish.

I am at present quite recovered from my late illness, and flatter myself that I may, in the ensuing summer, be able to undertake a trip to England, for the pleasure of seeing once more my dear friends there, among whom the bishop and his family stand foremost in my estimation and affection.

I thank you for your good wishes respecting me : mine for your welfare and prosperity are not less earnest and sincere ; being, with great truth, dear sir, your affectionate friend, and most obedient servant,

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

* * * * *

XC.

*To Lord Ashburton.**

April 27, 1783.

YOUR kind letter found me on board the Crocodile: I should have been very unhappy had it missed me, since I have long habituated myself to set the highest value on every word you speak, and every line you write. Of the two enclosed letters to our friends, Impey and Chambers, I will take the greatest care, and will punctually follow your directions as to the first of them. My departure was sudden indeed; but the Admiralty were so anxious for the sailing of this frigate, and their orders were so peremptory, that it was impossible to wait for any thing but a breeze. Our voyage has hitherto been tolerably pleasant, and, since we left the Channel, very quick. We begin to see albigores about the ship, and to perceive an agreeable change of climate. Our days, though short, give me ample time for study, recreation, and exercise; but my joy and delight proceed from the surprising health and spirits of Anna Maria, who

* Sir William Jones embarked for India in the Crocodile frigate; and left England in April, 1783.

joins me in affectionate remembrance to lady Ashburton. As to you, my dear lord, we consider you as the spring and fountain of our happiness ; as the author and parent ; a Roman would have added, (what the coldness of our northern language will hardly admit) the god of our fortunes. It is possible, indeed, that by incessant labour and irksome attendance at the bar, I might, in due time, have attained all that my very limited ambition could aspire to ; but in no other station than that which I owe to your friendship, could I have gratified at once my boundless curiosity concerning the people of the East, continued the exercise of my profession, in which I sincerely delight, and enjoyed at the same time the comforts of domestic life. The grand jury of Denbighshire have found, I understand, the bill against the dean of St. Asaph, for publishing my dialogue ; but as an indictment for a theoretical essay on government was, I believe, never before known, I have no apprehension for the consequences. As to the doctrines in the tract, though I shall certainly not preach them to the Indians, who must and will be governed by absolute power, yet I shall go through life with a persuasion, that they are just and rational, that substantial freedom is both the daughter and parent of virtue, and that virtue is the only source of public and private felicity.

Farewell.

In the course of his voyage, sir William Jones stopped at Madeira, and, after ten additional weeks of prosperous sailing, arrived at Hinzuan or Joanna. Of this island, where he remained a few days only, he has published an interest-

ing and amusing description. He expatiates with rapture on his approach to it, delineates, with the skill of an artist, the beauties of the scenery, and sketches, with the discriminating pen of a philosopher, the characters and manners of the unpolished, but hospitable natives. The novelty of the scene was attractive, and its impression upon his mind is strongly marked by the following just and elegant reflection, which, in substance, is more than once repeated in his writings:—"If life were not too short for the complete discharge of all our respective duties, public and private, and for the acquisition even of necessary knowledge in any degree of perfection—with how much pleasure and improvement might a great part of it be spent in admiring the beauties of this wonderful orb, and contemplating the nature of man in all its varieties!"

It would be injustice to his memory, to pass over without particular notice, the sensible and dignified rebuke, with which he repelled the rude attack of Mussulman bigotry on the divinity of our Saviour. During a visit which he made to a native of the island, a Coran was produced for his inspection, and his attention was pointedly directed to a passage in a commentary, accusing the Christians of blasphemy, in calling our Saviour the Son of God. "The commentator," he replied, "was much to blame for passing so indiscriminate and hasty a censure: the title which gave your legislator, and which gives you such offence, was often applied in Judea, by a bold figure, agreeably to the Hebrew idiom, though unusual in Arabic, to angels, to holy men, and even to all mankind, who are commanded to call God their father; and in this large sense, the apostle to the Romans calls the elect *the children of God*, and the Messiah, *the first born among many brethren*; but the words *only begotten*, are applied transcendentally and incomparably to him alone: and as for me, who believe the Scriptures, which you also profess to believe, though you assert without proof that we have altered them—I cannot refuse him an appellation, though far surpassing our reason, by which he is distinguished in the Gospel; and the believers in Mohammed, who expressly names him the Messiah, and pronounces him to have been born of a virgin, (which alone might fully justify the phrase condemned by

this author) are themselves condemnable, for cavilling at words, when they cannot object to the substance of our faith, consistently with their own."

This quotation affords a decisive proof of the belief of sir William Jones in the sublime doctrines of the Christian religion. Had he been even indifferent to his faith, he would have been silent on an occasion where he could expect neither candour nor concessions from his antagonists. Indeed, he was well aware, that a religious dispute with those zealots would have been fruitless and unseasonable, and might have been dangerous; but as it was inconsistent with his principles to disavow or conceal what he firmly believed and professed, he could not suffer the attack to pass without reprehension; and he grounded it on premises, which his opponents could not dispute, nor did they venture to answer.

From Hinzuan to the Ganges nothing material occurred. He landed at Calcutta in September, 1783; and in December following, entered upon his judicial functions.

XCI.

*To Warren Hastings, Esq.**

MY DEAR SIR,

INDEPENDENTLY of my general presumption, that whatever you determine is right, I cannot but admit the solidity of the reasons which induce you to

* After his arrival in India, sir William Jones devised the institution of a society at Calcutta, as a means of concentrating and preserving much valuable knowledge relative to

decline that precedence, to which, if our society were in its full vigour, instead of being in its cradle, you would have a title, paramount to all who have been, are, or will be, in this country. Every part of your letter (except that which your kind indulgence makes so honourable to me) carries with it the clearest conviction. Your first reason (namely, an unwillingness to accept an honorary trust, and want of leisure for one that may require an active part) must appear satisfactory to all. I trust, you will consider our act as proceeding solely from our anxiety to give you that distinction, which justice obliged us to give. As to myself, I could never have been satisfied, if, in traversing the sea of knowledge, I had fallen in with a ship of your rate and station, without striking my flag. One thing more, my dear sir, I must assure you of; that in whatever manner your objections had been stated, I should have thought them just and wise; and if it were not for the pleasure which your friendly communication of them has given me, I should repent of the trouble which our intended homage has occasioned.

I return Mr. Turner's letters, with many thanks for the entertainment which lady J. and myself have received from them. I promise myself much delight and instruction from his conversation; and hope, that when he shall think proper to communi-

Asia. The presidency of this society was offered to Warren Hastings, Esq. then governor-general of India; but Mr. Hastings, for reasons which had been anticipated, declined accepting it. Sir William Jones, on the receipt of his answer, addressed the following letter to Mr. Hastings.

cate a relation of his travels,* he will prefer our society to that of London. I will pay my respects to you in the evening, and am concerned, from a selfish motive, that the place where I now write, will so soon lose one of its greatest advantages. Believe me to be, with unfeigned regard, dear sir,

Your faithful and obedient servant,

WILLIAM JONES.

* * * * *

XCII.

To Mr. Justice Hyde.

Friday Evening, at the Chambers, Jan. 1784.

DEAR SIR,

RAMLOCHUND has raised my curiosity, by telling me, that when you had occasion to receive the evidence of some Mugs, they produced a book in strange square characters, which they called Zuboor : now, Zuboor is the name by which the Psalms of David are known in Asia. May not this book be the Psalms in old Hebrew or Samaritan, and the people a sect of Jews? Can you give me any information on this head?

* This relation was published in 1800, under the title of "An Account of an Embassy to the Court of Teshoo Lama in Tibet," &c. by Captain Samuel Turner.

XCIII.

To Mr. Justice Hyde.

Garden, May 14, 1784.

MANY thanks, my dear sir, for your kind concern and attention. I was on the bridge by Col. Tolly's house in the midst of the storm, my horses mad with the fear of the lightning, and my carriage every moment in danger of being upset by the wind; I was wet to the skin, and saved from worse inconvenience by the diligence of my servants, who took off the horses, and drew the carriage to a place of safety. I am nevertheless in good health; but lady Jones is not quite recovered from a severe cold and rheumatism, attended with a fever.

Remember, that I am always ready to relieve you at the chambers in the Loll Bazar,* and will cheerfully take the labouring oar next month if you please; especially, as I propose to spend the long vacation in a floating house, and to leave Calcutta as soon as the session is over; but I shall return dead or alive before the 22d of October. I am inexpressibly amused by a Persian translation of an

* A house in Calcutta, where the puisné judges of the supreme court of judicature attended by rotation in the evening, as justices of the peace.

old Sanscrit book, called Siry Bha'gwat, which comprises almost the whole of the Hindu religion, and contains the life and achievements of Crishen: it is by far the most entertaining book, on account of its novelty and wildness, that I ever read.—Farewell, and believe me, dear sir, ever affectionately yours.

WILLIAM JONES.

XCIV.

*To Dr. Patrick Russel.**

Calcutta, March 10, 1784.

You would readily excuse my delay in answering your obliging letter, if you could form an idea of the incessant hurry and confusion in which I have been kept ever since my arrival in Bengal, by necessary business, or necessary formalities, and by the difficulty of settling myself to my mind, in a country so different from that which I have left. I am, indeed, at best, but a bad correspondent; for I never write by candle light, and find so much Arabic or Persian to read, that all my leisure in a morning is hardly sufficient for a thousandth part

* Author of a splendid work on Indian Serpents. and of a Treatise on the Plague.

of the reading that would be highly agreeable and useful to me ; and as I purpose to spend the long vacation up the country, I wish to be a match in conversation with the learned natives, whom I may happen to meet.

I rejoice that you are so near, but lament that you are not nearer ; and am not without hope, that you may one day be tempted to visit Bengal, where, I flatter myself, you will give me as much of your company as possible.

Many thanks for your kind hints in regard to my health. As to me, I do not expect, as long as I stay in India, to be free from a bad digestion, the *morbus literatorum*, for which there is hardly any remedy, but abstinence from too much food, literary and culinary. I rise before the sun, and bathe after a gentle ride ; my diet is light and sparing, and I go early to rest ; yet the activity of my mind is too strong for my constitution, though naturally not infirm ; and I must be satisfied with a valetudinarian state of health. If you should meet with any curiosities on the coast, either in your botanical rambles or in reading, and will communicate them to our society, lately instituted for inquiring into the history, civil and natural, the antiquities, arts, sciences, and literature of Asia, we shall give you our hearty thanks. There is an Abyssinian here, who knew Mr. Bruce at Gwender. I have examined him, and he confirms Bruce's account. Every day supplies me with something new in Oriental learning ; and if I were to stay here half a century, I should be continually amused.

XCV.

To _____

April 13, 1784.

* * * * *

I AM discouraged from writing to you as copiously as I wish, by the fear that my letter may never reach you. I enclose, however, a hymn to the Indian Cupid, which is here said to be the only correct specimen of Hindu mythology that has appeared: it is certainly new and quite original, except the form of the stanza, which is Milton's. I add the character of lord Ashburton, which my zeal for his fame prompted me to publish.*

* * * * *

* Lord Ashburton died on the 18th of August, 1783. His character, written by sir William Jones, is published in vol. iv. of his works. The following extract from it will show the gratitude and sensibility of the writer:—"For some months before his death, the nursery had been his chief delight, and gave him more pleasure than the cabinet could have afforded: but this parental affection, which had been a source of so much felicity, was probably a cause of his fatal illness. He had lost one son, and expected to lose another, when the author of this painful tribute to his memory

Had I dreamt that the dialogue would have made such a stir, I should certainly have taken more pains with it. I will never cease to avow and justify the doctrine comprised in it. I meant it merely as an imitation of one of Plato's, where a boy, wholly ignorant of geometry, is made, by a few simple questions, to demonstrate a proposition; and I intended to inculcate, that the principles of government were so obvious and intelligible, that a clown might be brought to understand them. As to raising sedition, I as much thought of raising a church.

My dialogue contains my system, which I have ever avowed and ever will avow; but I perfectly agree (and no man of sound intellect can disagree), that such a system is wholly inapplicable to this country, where millions of men are so wedded to inveterate prejudices and habits, that if liberty could be forced upon them by Britain, it would make them as miserable as the cruelest despotism.

Pray remember me affectionately to all my friends at the bar, whom I have not time to enumerate; and assure my academical and professional friends, that I will write to them all when I have leisure.

Farewell, &c.

parted from him, with tears in his eyes, little hoping to see him again in a perishable state. As he perceives, without affectation, that his tears now steal from him, and begin to moisten the paper on which he writes, he reluctantly leaves a subject which he could not soon have exhausted; and when he also shall resign his life to the great Giver of it, he desires no other decoration of his humble grave-stone, than this honourable truth:

With none to flatter, none to recommend,

Dunning approved, and mark'd him as a friend."

XCVI.

To Charles Chapman, Esq.

Gardens near Allipore, April 26, 1784.

ALLOW me, dear sir, to give you the warmest thanks, in my own name, and in that of our infant society, for the pleasure which we have received from your interesting account of Cochin-china, with considerable extracts from which we have been favoured by our patrons. Our meetings are well attended, and the society may really be said, considering the recent time of its establishment, to flourish.

We have been rather indisposed, the weather being such as we had no idea of in England—excessive heat at noon, and an incessant high wind from morning to night; at this moment it blows a hurricane, and my study reminds me of my cabin at sea. Our way of life, however, is quite pastoral in this retired spot; as my prime favourites, among all our pets, are two large English sheep, which came with us from Spithead, and, having narrowly escaped the knife, are to live as long and as happily with us as they can: they follow us for bread, and are perfectly domestic. We are literally lulled to sleep by Persian nightingales, and cease to wonder, that the Bulbul, with a thousand

tales, makes such a figure in Oriental poetry.— Since I am resolved to sit regularly in court as long as I am well, (not knowing how soon I may be forced to remit my attention to business) I shall not be at liberty to enter my budgerow till near the end of July, and must be again in Calcutta on the 22d of October; so that my time will be very limited: and I shall wish, if possible, to see Benares.*

XCVII.

To Charles Chapman, Esq.

Jungipore, August 30, 1784.

NOTHING but a series of severe attacks of illness could have prevented my replying long ago to your friendly letter. After resisting them by temperance and exercise for some time, I was quite overpowered by a fever, which has confined me ten weeks to my couch, but is now almost entirely abated,

* The principal object of his meditated excursion was to open sources of information on topics entirely new in the republic of letters. The indisposition which he mentions, not without apprehensions of its continuance, had not altogether left him when he commenced his journey; and during the progress of it, returned with a severity, which long held the public in anxious suspense, before any hopes could be entertained of its favourable termination.

though it has left me in a state of extreme weakness. I had a relapse at Raugamutty, which obliged me to stay three weeks at Afzalbang, where the judgment and attention of Dr. Glas prevented perhaps serious consequences. I have spent two days at this place; and I find myself so much better, that I propose to continue my voyage this evening: whether I shall be able to go farther than Patna, (I long to see Benares,) is very uncertain. This is only the second attempt I have made to write since my illness; and as I hold my pen with some difficulty, I will say no more, than that I am, with great esteem, &c.

P. S. I cannot help adding, that your proposal of extracting such parts of your very interesting narrative concerning Cochin-china, as you may think proper to deposit among the archives of our society, is the very thing I wished, and I really think it will be one of our most valuable tracts.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE PIETY OF SIR WILLIAM
JONES.

BUT the thoughts and attention of sir William Jones were not confined to the perishable concerns of this world only; and what was the subject of his meditations in health, was more forcibly impressed upon his mind during illness. He knew the duty of

resignation to the will of his Maker, and of dependence on the merits of a Redeemer: these sentiments are expressed in a short prayer, which he composed during his indisposition, in September, 1784, and which I here insert:

“ O Thou Bestower of all good ; if it please Thee to continue my easy tasks in this life, grant me strength to perform them as a faithful servant : but if thy wisdom hath willed to end them by this thy visitation, admit me, not weighing my unworthiness, but through thy mercy declared in Christ, into thy heavenly mansions, that I may continually advance in happiness, by advancing in true knowledge and awful love of Thee. Thy will be done !”

Among many additional proofs which might be given of the religious principles of sir William Jones, is the following short prayer, composed on waking, July 27, 1783, at sea, also copied from his own writing :

“ Graciously accept our thanks, 'Thou Giver of all good, for having preserved us another night, and bestowed on us another day. O, grant that on this day, we may meditate on thy law with joyful veneration, and keep it, in all our actions, with firm obedience !”

Minute circumstances frequently tend to mark and develope character. As a farther instance of this observation, however trifling it may appear, the application, by sir William Jones to himself, of two lines of Milton, in his own writing, under a

card with his printed name, in addition to more substantial proofs, may be quoted in evidence of his habitual frame of mind :

Not wandering poor, but trusting all his wealth
With God, who call'd him to a land unknown.

On another scrap of paper, the following lines appear : they were written by him in India, but at what period is not known, nor indeed is of any consequence :

Sir EDWARD COKE.

Six hours in sleep, in law's grave study six,
Four spend in prayer,—the rest on nature fix :

RATHER,

Seven hours to law, to soothing slumber seven,
Ten to the world allot, and *all* to Heaven.

If we sometimes suffer the humiliation of seeing great talents and extensive erudition prostituted to infidelity, and employed in propagating misery, by endeavouring to subvert the basis of our temporal and eternal welfare ; we cannot but feel a more than common gratification, at the salutary union of true genius and piety. Learning, that wantons in irreligion, may, like the Sirius of Homer, flash its strong light upon us ; but though brilliant, it is baneful ; and, while it dazzles, makes us tremble for our safety. Science, therefore, without piety, whatever admiration it may excite, will never be

entitled to an equal degree of respect and esteem, with the humble knowledge which makes us wise unto salvation. The belief of sir William Jones in revelation, is openly and distinctly declared in his works : but the unostentatious effusions of sequestered adoration, whilst they prove the sincerity of his conviction, give an additional weight to his avowed opinions.

XCVIII.

*To John Macpherson, Esq.**

March 12, 1785.

I ALWAYS thought, before I left England, that a regard for the public good required the most cordial union between the executive and judicial powers in this country ; and I lamented the mischief occasioned by former divisions. Since I have no view of happiness on this side of the grave, but in a faithful discharge of my duty, I shall spare no pains to preserve that cordiality which subsists, I trust, and will subsist, between the government and the judges.

Lord Bacon, if I remember right, advises every statesman to relieve his mind from the fatigues of business by a poem, or a prospect, or any thing that raises agreeable images : now, as your own gardens afford you the finest prospects, and I

* Afterwards sir John Macpherson, Bart.

should only offer you a view of paddy-fields,* I send you, for your amusement, what has amused me in the composition—a poem † on the old philosophy and religion of this country; and you may depend on its orthodoxy. The time approaches when I must leave these recreations, and return to my desk in court, where, however, a knowledge of the Hindu manners and prejudices may not be useless.

XCIX.

To John Macpherson, Esq.

May 17, 1785.

I HAVE so many things, my dear sir, to thank you for, that I scarcely know where to begin. To follow the order of time, I must, in the first place, give you my hearty thanks for your kind and pleasing letter of last week, which shows that your mind can grasp the whole field of literature and criticism, as well as that of politics; and that, in the manner of ancient rulers in Asia, particularly Cicero, the governor of Cilicia, you unite the character of the statesman and the scholar: next for the news, which has on the whole given me pleasure, and in

* Rice-fields.

† The Enchanted Fruit, or Hindu Wife. See his Works, vol. vi.

particular, what both pleases and surprises me, that lord Camden has accepted the post of president of the council. You know the opinion which I early formed of Pitt; and that opinion will be raised still higher, if he has shown himself (not merely indifferent, but) anxious that the reins of this government may long continue in the hands which now hold them; and which, though mortals, as Addison says, cannot command success, will certainly deserve it. I anxiously wish, for the sake of the public, that not only the operations of the law, but the cordial assent of those on whom it depends, have already secured your seat, as long as it may be consistent with your happiness to fill it.

* * * * *

I will not fail to talk with Mr. Chambers on the college; and beg you to assure yourself that I shall ever be happy, in my sphere, to give my humble assistance, whenever you may require it.

C.

To John Macpherson, Esq.

May 22, 1785.

It was my intention to present to you, in the author's name, the books which I now send. The poet Zainudeen was recommended to me soon after I came to India, as a worthy ingenious old man. I

enclose his verses to you, with a hasty translation, on the back of the paper, of the best couplets. The smaller volume contains part of the epic poem, which is written with enthusiasm; and the other volume is filled with odes and elegies, all in the old man's writing: he is married to immortal verse; and his highest ambition is, to be an atom in one of your sun beams.

CI.

To John Macpherson, Esq.

May, 1785.

THE ornament of the faith, (for that is the bard's name) Zainudeen, will wait upon you on Wednesday: his style of compliments is moderate, in comparison of most Oriental compositions; other poets of this country would have entreated you not to ride on horseback, lest you should cause an earthquake in India when you mounted. This was actually said to a prince at Delhi, who pleasantly bade the poet comfort himself; and assured him, that he would ever after go in a palanquin.

CII.

To John Macpherson, Esq.

May 26, 1785.

THE regulation which you made concerning the Madrissa,* is so salutary, that few things would grieve me more than to see it frustrated. Your predecessor has often mentioned to me, the high opinion which he had formed of the rector; but (I

* The passages in these letters relating to the Madrissa, or college, as an establishment of national importance, merits a more particular explanation. Mr. Hastings, whilst he held the office of governor-general, with a view to promote the knowledge of Mohammedan law, as essential to the due administration of justice to the natives of India, had established a college at Calcutta, in which native students were admitted and taught at the public expense. This institution was dictated by a wise policy: it was calculated to conciliate the affections of the Mussulmans, and to insure a succession of men properly qualified by education to expound the law of the Coran, and to fill the important offices of magistrates in the courts of justice. The president of this college had been selected with every attention to his character and ability; but, some representations having been made to his disadvantage, the succeeding governor-general, J. Macpherson, Esq. consulted sir William Jones, on the regulations proper to be established for promoting the laudable objects of the institution, and controlling its conduct.

know not for what reason) he is very unpopular.— Perhaps it is only faction, too common in most colleges at our universities, of the students against the head.

It is a remark of Johnson's,* that as spiders would make silk, if they could agree together; so men of letters would be useful to the public, if they were not perpetually at variance. Besides my approbation, as a good citizen, of your regulations, I have a particular interest in the conduct of Mujdudeen, who is Maulavy† of the court, and, as such, ought to be *omni exceptione major*: I believe, from my conversation with him, that he is not a man of deep learning; but his manners are not unpleasing. The proposal which you make, cannot but produce good effects; but I hardly know any member of our society, who answers your description for a visitor under your directions, except Mr. Chambers, and his report might be depended on. I will, if you please, propose it on Thursday. The students brought a complaint before me last term, which I dismissed, as not being within my cognizance, that their allowances were taken by the head, who left them without subsistence; but whether this be true or false, it will not be amiss for the Maulavy to know, that he is subject to visitation from time to time.

If the best intentions can insure safety, you have nothing to apprehend; but alas! my friend, if you can be safe only in fixed unanimous opinions of statute law, you can seldom, I fear, act with perfect

* Originally Reaumur's.

† Expounder of the Mohammedan law.

confidence. Such is the imperfection of human language, that few written laws are free from ambiguity; and it rarely happens that many minds are united in the same interpretation of them.

A statesman told lord Coke, that he meant to consult him on a point of law. "If it be common law," said Coke, "I should be ashamed if I could not give you a ready answer; but if it be statute law, I should be equally ashamed if I answered you immediately."

I will here only set down a few rules of interpretation, which the wisdom of ages has established, where the sense of the words is at all ambiguous.

1. The intention of the writer must be sought, and prevail over the literal sense of terms; but penal laws must be strictly expounded against offenders, and liberally against the offence.

2. All clauses, preceding or subsequent, must be taken together, to explain any one doubtful clause.

3. When a case is expressed to remove any doubt, whether it was included or not, the extent of the clause, with regard to cases not so expressed, is by no means restrained.

4. The conclusion of a phrase is not confined to the words immediately preceding, but usually extended to the whole antecedent phrase.

These are copious maxims, and, with half a dozen more, are the stars by which we steer in the construction of all public and private writings.

CIII.

To John Macpherson, Esq.

Court House, July.

WE have just convicted a low Hindu of a foul conspiracy, which would have ended in perjury, and (as his own law-giver says) in every cause of damnation. If richer men were of the plot, I hope our court will escape the reproach of the satirist, that "laws resemble cobwebs, which catch flies, and let the wasps break through."

CIV.

To John Macpherson, Esq.

August 14, 1785.

I GIVE you my hearty thanks, my dear sir, for the history of the Roman Republic, which I read with particular pleasure.

Looking over my shelves the other day, I laid my hand on the annexed little book, ascribed to sir

Walter Raleigh : it is, like most posthumous works, incorrect ; but contains, with some rubbish, a number of wise aphorisms and pertinent examples ; it is rather the common-place book of some statesman, than a well digested treatise ; but it has amused me on a second reading, and I hope it will amuse a few of your leisure moments.

CV.

To Dr. Patrick Russel.

Crishnagur, Sept. 8, 1785.

YOUR two kind letters found me overwhelmed with the business of a severe sessions and term, which lasted two months, and fatigued me so much, that I was forced to hasten from Calcutta as fast as winds and oars could carry me. I am now at the ancient university of Nadeya, where I hope to learn the rudiments of that venerable and interesting language, which was once vernacular in all India, and in both the peninsulas with their islands. Your pursuits must be delightful, and I shall be impatient to see the fruit of your learned labours. Our society goes on slowly ; and hot-bed fruits are not so good to my taste as those which ripen naturally.

* * * * *

Dr. Koenig's loss will be severely felt ; he was a

valuable man, with as much simplicity as nature herself, whose works he studied. Do you know when his books are to be disposed of? I should wish to purchase his Linnæus.

CVI.

To Charles Chapman, Esq.

Crishnagur, Sept. 28, 1785.

I AM proceeding slowly, but surely, in this retired place, in the study of Sanscrit; for I can no longer bear to be at the mercy of our pundits, who deal out Hindu law as they please, and make it at reasonable rates, when they cannot find it ready made. I annex the form adopted by us for the oaths of Mussulmans: you will, in your discretion, adopt or reject it; and if you can collect from Mahesa pundit, who seemed a worthy honest man, how Hindu witnesses ought to be examined, and whether the Brahmins can give absolution (I think they call it *pryarchitt*) for perjury, and in what case, you will greatly oblige me, and contribute to the advancement of justice.

CVII.

To John Macpherson, Esq.

Calcutta.

* * * * *

LADY Jones and myself received much benefit from the dry soil and pure air of Crishnagur : how long my health will continue in this town, with constant attendance in court every morning, and the irksome business of justice of peace in the afternoon, I cannot foresee. If temperance and composure of mind will avail, I shall be well ; but I would rather be a valetudinarian all my life, than leave unexplored the Sanscrit mine which I have just opened.

I have brought with me the father of the university of Nadeya, who, though not a Brahmin, has taught grammar and ethics to the most learned Brahmins, and has no priestly pride, with which his pupils, in general, abound.

CVIII.

To Sir John Macpherson, Bart.

MY DEAR SIR,

Phoenix Sloop, Feb. 5, 1786.

HAD I known where Captain Light* lived in Calcutta, I would not have troubled you with the annexed letter; but I must request you to forward it to him: it is an answer to an excellent letter from him, which I received near a twelvemonth ago. I anxiously hope he has completed (what no other European could begin) a version of the Siamese code.

My voyage to the eastern coast, will, I trust, be very pleasant, and I hope we shall make our part good against the scoundrel Peguers; though, if we descry a fleet of boats, I believe it will be wiser to retreat on the wings of the Phoenix; for I am not poet enough to believe, that another will rise from her ashes.

I lament that our respective engagements have prevented our meeting often, since the end of the rains; but six or seven hours in the morning, and two or three in the evening, spent in unremitted labour, for the last three months, fatigued me so

* Captain Light was appointed superintendent of a new settlement at Penang, or Prince of Wales's Island.

much, that I had no leisure for society—scarcely any for natural repose. My last act was to sign our letter to your board on the subject of our salaries ; and I would have called upon you, to expostulate amicably on the measure you had pursued, if I had not wished to spare you the pain of defending indefensible steps, and the difficulty of finding reasons to support the most unreasonable conduct. Many passages in the letter were softened by my brethren ; for I, who have long been habituated to ancient simplicity, am ever inclined both to write and speak as I think or feel ; and I should certainly have asked, if we had conversed on this matter, whether distressing and pinching the judges, and making them contemptible in the eyes of the natives and of their own servants, was, as you expressed yourself last summer, assisting them with heart and hand ; or whether forming resolutions, as the sub-treasurer wrote me word three weeks ago concerning them, of which they were the last men in the settlement to hear, was intended as a return for that perfect cordiality, as far as honesty permitted, which I had assured you and Mr. Stables, to be one of the golden rules which I had early resolved to pursue in my judicial character.

In a word, the measure is so totally indefensible, that it would have given me as much pain as yourself, to have discussed it. I have marked the progress of this business from the morning when I received Mr. M.'s note ; and I am well persuaded, that the invasion of our property was not an idea conceived or approved by you, but forced on you by some financier, who was himself deluded by a conceit of impartiality ; not considering that the

cases were by no means parallel : under this persuasion, I beg you to believe, that the measure has not yet made any change in the sincere esteem, with which I am, dear sir,

Your faithful humble servant,

WILLIAM JONES.

CIX.

To Thomas Caldicott, Esq.

Chatigan, Feb. 21, 1786.

I HAVE been so loaded with business, that I deferred writing to you till it was too late to write much ; and when the term ended, was obliged, for the sake of my wife's health and my own, to spend a few weeks in this Indian Montpelier, where the hillocks are covered with pepper vines, and sparkle with the blossoms of the coffee tree : but the description of the place would fill a volume, and I can only write a short letter to say, *si vales, bene est : valeo.*

CX.

To George Hardinge, Esq.

Feb. 22, 1786.

A WORD to you ; no ! though you have more of wisdom (*et verbum sapienti*, &c.) than I have, or wish to have of popularity, yet I would not send you one word, but millions and trillions of words, if I were not obliged to reserve them for conversation. The immeasurable field that lies before me, in the study of Sanscrit and of Hindu jurisprudence (the Arabic laws are familiar to me), compels me, for the present, to suspend my intention of corresponding regularly with those I love.

CXI.

To Sir John Macpherson, Bart.

Jafferabad, Feb. 27, 1786.

I CANNOT express, my dear sir, the pleasure which I have just received from that part of the board's letter to us, in which they set us right in our misconception of their preceding letter.

I rejoice that we were mistaken, and have just signed our reply : it will, I persuade myself, restore the harmony of our concert ; which, if worldly affairs have any analogy to music, will rather be improved than spoiled by a short dissonant interval. You, who are a musician, will feel the tone of this metaphor : as to my harsher notes, *quicquid asperius dictum est, indictum esto*. In fact, (you could not know it, but) I never had been so pinched in my life, as for the last three months ; having bought company's bonds, (which nothing but extreme necessity could have made me sell at 30 per cent. discount) I was unable to pay my physician, or my munshis ; and was forced to borrow, for the first time in my life, for my daily rice : what was worse, I was forced to borrow of a black man ; and it was like touching a snake or the South American eel : in short, if our apprehensions had been well-grounded, two of us had resolved to go home next season. But your letter dispersed all clouds, and made my mind as clear as the air of this fine climate, where I expect to escape the heats, and all the ills they produce in a constitution like mine. I confess, I wish you had accepted our offer ; for half my salary is enough for me, and I would have received the remainder cheerfully on any terms, as I have hitherto done : but as it is, we are all satisfied ; and your offers were so equal, that either would have been satisfactory to me.

You must know better than I can, though I am so much nearer the place on the frontiers where Major Ellerker is now encamped. I can hardly

persuade myself that Myun Gachim Fera,* with all his bravery in words, will venture to pass the Nâf: the whole story is curious; and as I am on the spot, I wish to write it with all the gravity of an historian, especially as I can pick out some part of the Pegu general's original letter, the characters of which are little more than the *nagari* letters inverted and rounded.

I now sit opposite to the seas, which wafted us gently hither in the Phoenix; and our voyage was well-timed; for, had we stayed two days longer, we should have been in a north-wester. A beautiful vale lies between the hillock on which the house is built, and the beach: on all the other sides are hills finely diversified with groves; the walks are scented with blossoms of the *champao*† and *nagasar*;‡ and the plantations of pepper and coffee are equally new and pleasing. My wife, who desires her best remembrance, amuses herself with drawing, and I with botany. If, (which I trust will not be the case) you should be indisposed, this is the Montpellier which will restore you to health.

* A general in the service of the king of Ava, who appeared on the frontiers of Chatigan with an army. The Nâf is the boundary river between Chatigan and Aracan.

† *Michelia champaca*, of Linnæus.

‡ *Mesua ferrea*, of Linnæus.

CXII.

To Mr. Justice Hyde.

Jafferabad, April 30, 1786.

I DELAYED, my dear sir, to answer your kind letter of the 10th, until I could give you an accurate account of my motions towards Calcutta. We shall not stay here a whole week longer, but proceed, as soon as we can make preparations for our journey, to the burning well,* and thence through Tipera to

* This well is situated about twenty-two miles from Chaitan : its shape is oblong : it measures about six feet by four ; and is twelve feet in depth. The water, which is always cold, is supplied by a spring ; and there is a conduit for carrying off the superfluity. A part of the surface of the well, about a fourth, is covered with brick-work, which is nearly ignited by the flames, which flash, without intermission, from the surface of the water. It would appear that an inflammable vapour escapes through the water, which takes fire on contact with the external air ; the perpetuity of the flame is occasioned by the ignited brick-work ; as, without this, much of the vapour would escape without conflagration. This was proved by taking away the covering of brick-work after the extinction of the heat, by throwing upon it the water of the well : the flames still continued to burst forth from the surface, but with momentary intermissions ; and the vapour was always immediately kindled, by holding a candle at a small distance from the surface of the water. A

Dacca: an old engagement will oblige us to deviate a little out of our way to Comarcaly; and if the Jellingy be navigable, we shall soon be in Calcutta; if not, we must pass a second time through the Sundarbans: in all events, nothing, I think, can hinder my being in court on the 15th of June. Suffer me now to thank you, as I do most heartily, for the very useful information which you give me concerning money matters. The ancients said (not very properly), of their imaginary gods, “carior est Divis homo quam sibi;” but I may truly say, “carior est amicis quam sibi,” speaking of myself, and of your friendly attentions to me.

CXIII.

To Sir John Macpherson, Bart.

May 6, 1786.

I DELAYED, from day to day, and from week to week, the pleasure of answering your acceptable letter, which I received, I am afraid, so long ago

piece of silver, placed in the conduit for carrying off the superfluous water, was discoloured in a few minutes, and an infusion of tea gave a dark tinge to the water.

On the side of a hill, distant about three miles from the burning well, there is a spot of ground of a few feet only in dimensions, from which flashes of fire burst, on stamping strongly with the foot. The appearance of this spot resembles that of earth, on which a fire has been kindled.

as the middle of March: I wished to send you something interesting; but my days flowed on in the same equable and uniform tenor, and were only to be distinguished by the advances I made in my Persian, Indian, and botanical pursuits. In short, as it sometimes happens, by intending to write much, I had written nothing; and was preparing to give you some account of my motions towards the presidency, when I had the very great satisfaction of receiving your packet full of matter, full of pleasing accounts, and full of just observations. * * * * *

I read with pleasure, while I was at breakfast, Mr. Forster's lively little tract; and having finished my daily task of Persian reading with a learned parsi of Yezd, who accompanied me hither, I allot the rest of the morning to you.

The approbation given at home to your seasonable exertions here, was but natural; it could not have been otherwise, and therefore it gives me great pleasure, but no surprise. Be assured, that general applause ever has resulted, and ever will result, from good actions and salutary measures, as certainly as an echo, in rocky places, follows the voice. You will readily believe me, when I assure you, that I have few things more at heart than that you may enjoy as much as you can desire of that echo, and receive no pain or injury from the rocks; for rocks abound, my friend, in the sea of life.

The Scripture speaks of nations overturning their *judges in stony places*; and ambitious judges ought to be overturned: but as I do not aspire, I can never fall from an eminence.

The state of parties in England still makes me rejoice, that I am not in London : my friendships would lead me naturally to wish the rise of the
 * * * * * while my conscience, and my humble judgment oblige me to prefer system, as far as I know it. God grant he may adopt the best measures for this country, and give them effect by the best means, without disarranging your measures ; since the wheel of continual changes cannot but have a bad effect in the minds of the governed :—but I sat down to write a letter, not a treatise.

By the way, I have read a second time here your friend's Treatise on the History of Civil Society, and am extremely pleased with it, especially his chapter on the relaxation of national spirit.

* * * * *

Your communications about the Lama will be truly interesting. I have read, since I left Calcutta, 800 pages in quarto, concerning the Mythology and History, both civil and natural, of Tibet : the work was printed with every advantage of new types and curious engravings at Rome, about ten years ago, and was compiled from the papers of an Italian father, named Orazio, who had lived thirty years in that country and Napal, where he died. On my return, I purpose, with the permission of the society, to send a treatise* to the press, which ought to stand first in our collections, as it will be a key to many other papers. I have caused six or seven plates to be engraved for it.

* A Dissertation on the Orthography of Asiatic Words, in Roman Letters.—See Sir W. Jones's Works, vol. i.

Always excepting my own imperfect essays, I may venture to foretell, that the learned in Europe will not be disappointed by our first volume. But my great object, at which I have long been labouring, is to give our country a complete digest of Hindu and Mussulman law. I have enabled myself, by excessive care, to read the oldest Sanscrit law-books, with the help of a loose Persian paraphrase; and I have begun a translation of Menu into English; the best Arabian law-tract I translated last year. What I can possibly perform alone, I will, by God's blessing, perform; and I would write on the subject to the minister, chancellor, the board of control, and the directors, if I were not apprehensive that they who know the world, but do not fully know me, would think that I expected some advantage either of fame or patronage, by purposing to be made the Justinian of India; whereas I am conscious of desiring no advantage, but the pleasure of doing general good. I shall consequently proceed in the work by my own strength, and will print my digest by degrees at my own expense, giving copies of it where I know they will be useful. One point I have already attained: I made the pundit of our court read and correct a copy of Halhed's* book in the original Sanscrit, and I then obliged him to attest it as good law; so that he never now can give corrupt opinions, without certain detection.

May your commercial blossom arrive at maturity with all the vigour of Indian vegetation!

* A translation by N. B. Halhed, esq. of the code compiled by pundits, by the direction of Mr. Hastings.

My soul expands, like your blossom, at the idea of improved commerce : no subject is to me more animating.

I have a commercial idea for you, not a blossom, but as yet a germ only. What if Persia should now flourish ! and what if the present king, Jaffier Khan, be really as great a man as represented ! Persia wants many manufactures of India, and her king would be a valuable ally. * * *

* * * I have already thanked you for your kind attentions to Emin, and I beg to repeat them : many in England will be equally thankful. He is a fine fellow ; and if active service should be required, he would seek nothing so much, as to be placed in the most perilous edge of the battle.*

* In this letter, we see the unabated activity of a vigorous mind, uniting recreation with improvement, and collecting, in its progress through the gardens of literature, the flowers of every soil. A detailed account of the daily studies of sir William Jones would surprise the most indefatigable ; and it may not be impertinent to mention, in proof of this observation, that he found time, during his short residence at Chatigan, in addition to the occupations which he has described, to peruse twice the heroic poem of Ferdosi, the Homer of Persia, supposed to contain sixty thousand couplets.

Few persons have passed through a greater variety of hardships and perilous adventures, than the person mentioned by sir William Jones under the name of Emin.—Born at Hamadan, in Persia, of Armenian parents, and exposed during his infancy to uncommon disasters ; while a mere youth, he followed his father and ruined family to Calcutta : he had there an opportunity of observing the superiority of Europeans, in arms, arts, and sciences, over the Asiatics ; and the impression which he received from it, inspired an invincible desire in Emin to acquire the know-

CXIV.

To Mr. Justice Hyde.

Comarcaly, June 15, 1786.

I FIND that, in this county, travellers are perfect slaves to the seasons and elements. It was my resolution, when I left Dacca, to push on as expeditiously as possible to Calcutta; but, in our passage of eight days, last year, through the Tulsi creek, and the Artai river, our boat was hotter, day and night, than ever I felt a vapour-bath: till then, as much as I had reason to dread an Indian

ledge which they possessed. For this purpose, he determined, at all hazards, to visit England; and, after a long opposition from his father, having obtained his reluctant assent, he adopted the only means left for the accomplishment of his purpose—by working his passage as a common sailor in one of the ships belonging to the East-India Company. After his arrival in England, he lost no time in beginning to acquire the instruction which he so anxiously desired; but his progress was retarded by the narrowness of his circumstances, and he was compelled to submit to menial occupations, and laborious employments, to procure a subsistence. In a moment of despair, he was accidentally introduced to the notice of the duke of Northumberland, and afterwards to that of many gentlemen of rank and fortune, by whose assistance his views were promoted.

sun, I had not a complete idea of it. This affected both lady Jones and myself so much, that it would have been madness to have passed the Sundarbans in such weather; and Mr. Redfearn having promised to send me word when the Jelinga becomes navigable, (which is usually about the middle of this month) I expect every day to receive that intelligence; after which, I shall be in Calcutta in eight days. I am principally vexed at this delay, because, from your having taken the charge when it was sir R. Chambers's turn, I fear he must be ill; and consequently that you must have a great deal of trouble. Give my affectionate remembrance to him.

I am, &c.

CXV.

To Miss E. Shipley.

On the Ganges, Sept. 7, 1786.

You do too much honour, my dear madam, to my compositions: they amuse me in the few hours of leisure that my business allows; and if they amuse my friends, I am amply rewarded.

Ma si 'l Latino e 'l Greco
 Parlan di me dopo la morte, è un vento;
 Ond' io, perchè pavento
 Adunar sempre quel ch' un' ora sgombre,
 Vorrei 'l vero abbracciar lassando l' ombra.

We talk of the year 1790, as the happy limit of our residence in this unpropitious climate; but this must be a family secret, lest applications should be made for my place, and I should be shoved out before my resignation. God grant, that the bad state of my Anna's health may not compel her to leave India before me! I should remain like a man with a dead palsy on one of his sides: but it were better to lose one side for a time, than both for ever. I do not mean that she has been, or is likely to be, in danger from her complaints: I have proposed a visit to her friend lady Campbell, and she seemed to receive the proposal with pleasure; the sea air, and change of scene, at a proper season, may do more than all the faculty, with all their prescriptions.—As to politics and ministers, let me whisper another secret in your ear:—

In non credo più al *nero* ch' all' *azzurro* :—

and, as to coalitions, if the *nero* be mixed with the *azzurro*, they will only make a dirtier colour. India is yet secure, and improveable beyond imagination: it is not, however, in such a state of security, but that wise politicians may, with strong well-timed exertions, and well-applied address, contrive to lose it. The discharge of my duty, and the study of Indian laws in their original languages, (which is no inconsiderable part of my duty) are an excuse for my neglect of writing letters; and indeed I find by experience, that I can take up my pen for that purpose but once a year, and I have a hundred unanswered letters now lying before me; but my Anna, who is my secretary

of state, and first, or rather *sole* lady of the treasury, has written volumes. Loves and regards to all who love and regard us: as to compliments, they are unmeaning things, and neither become me to send, nor you to convey.

I am, with great regard, dear madam, your faithful and affectionate servant,

WILLIAM JONES.

CXVI.

To Dr. Patrick Russel.

Crishna-nagur, Sept. 28, 1786.

VARIOUS causes contribute to render me a bad correspondent; particularly the discharge of my public duty, and the studies which are connected with that duty, such as the Indian and Arabic laws in their several difficult languages, one of which has occupied most of my leisure for the last twelvemonth, excepting when I travelled to Islamabad, for the benefit of the sea-air and verdant hillocks, during the hot season. It is only in such a retirement as the cottage, where I am passing a short vacation, that I can write to literary friends, or even think much on literary subjects; and it was long after I left this solitude last autumn, that I had the pleasure of receiving your most agreeable letter.

I am tolerably strong in Sanscrit, and hope to prove my strength soon by translating a law tract of great intrinsic merit, and extremely curious, which the Hindus believe to be almost as old as the creation : it is ascribed to Menu, the Minos of India, and, like him, the son of Jove. My present study is the original of Bidpa's fables, called Hitopadesa,* which is a charming book, and wonderfully useful to a learner of the language. I congratulate you on the completion of your two works, but exhort you to publish them. Think how much fame Kœnig lost by delaying his publications. God knows whether any use, honourable to his memory, will be made of his manuscripts. Think of Mr. D'Herbelot, whose posthumous work, like most others, had the fate of being incorrectly published. Printing is dear at Calcutta ; but if government would print your works, (as they ought) I could cheerfully superintend commas and colons. I am delighted with your botanical pursuits. They talk of a public garden on the banks of the river, near Calcutta. How I wish, for our sakes, you could be allured from the Sircars ! I long to visit them, however, and to view your collections ; though I must be so honest as to own, that *accurate* botanical descriptions give me more pleasure than an herbal, I mean where the fresh plants can be examined. For this reason, I have not begun to collect specimens, but describe as well as I can ; and for brevity, in coarse Latin. Lady Jones assists me by her accuracy in drawing and colouring.

* Translated by sir W. Jones, and published in his works.

The province of Chatigān (vulgarly Chitigong) is a noble field for a naturalist. It is so called, I believe, from the chatag, which is the most beautiful little bird I ever saw. The hills and woods abound with uncommon plants and animals; indeed, the whole Eastern peninsula would be a new world to a philosopher. I wish poor Kœnig had left his papers to you: Banks has too much of his own to employ him; and Macpherson, who loved the sage, would, I dare say, have persuaded lord Cornwallis to raise the best monument to his memory—a good edition of his works. I have carefully examined a plant, which Kœnig mentioned to me, and called *pentapethès protea*, from the singular variety of leaves on the same tree: the natives call it *maschamchand*; and one of its fragrant fleshy blossoms, infused for a night in a glass of water, forms a mucilage of a very cooling quality. The *pentapethès phœnicia*, which now beautifies this plain, produces a similar mucilage, which might answer the same purposes as that of the Arabian gum, if not other and more important purposes. But I mention this plant, because Kœnig told me, that Linnæus had inverted nature in his description of it, by assigning to it five castrated filaments, to each of which were annexed three prolific ones; whereas, said he (I am sure I did not mistake him), the flower has fifteen castrated, and five prolific; so that in truth it would have been *pentandrian*. Now I have examined all the flowers of this species that I could get, and I find the description of Linnæus to be correct; but there is no accounting for the variety of a protean plant.

Many thanks for your offer of M. D'Hancar-

ville ; but I have the book, though, like you, I have not read it : I wish to be firm in Sanscrit, before I read systems of mythology. We have sent the first papers of our Transactions to the press, and shall go on as fast as Mr. G.'s compositor will let us. Farewell, my dear sir. *Vivere, valere, et philosophari cum paucis*, is what I wish for you, as much as for your, &c.

CXVII.

*To William Shipley, Esq.**

Crishna-nagur, Oct. 5, 1786.

I BLUSH, my dear sir, in reading, a second or third time, with increasing delight, your excellent letters from Maidstone, when I compare the dates of them

* Brother to the late bishop of St. Asaph, and now in his eighty-ninth year. This gentleman suggested the idea of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Commerce, &c. which was established in 1753 ; and, in the following year, a gold medal was voted to him by the Society, with an inscription :—

TO WILLIAM SHIPLEY,
whose public spirit
gave rise to this
SOCIETY.

with that of my answer. Various, however, are the causes which oblige me to be an indifferent and slow correspondent: first, illness, which had confined me three months to my couch, where your first letter found me on the great river; next, the discharge of an important duty, which falls peculiarly heavy on the Indian judges, who are forced to act as justices of the peace in a populous country, where the police is deplorably bad; then, the difficult study of Hindu and Mohammedan laws, in two copious languages, Sanscrit and Arabic—which studies are inseparably connected with my public duty, and may tend to establish, by degrees, among ten millions of our black subjects, that security of descendable property, a want of which, as you justly observe, has prevented the people of Asia from improving their agriculture and mechanical arts: lastly, I may add, (though rather an amusement than a duty) my pursuit of general literature, which I have here an opportunity of doing, from the fountain head—an opportunity which, if lost, may never be recovered. When I accept, therefore, with gratitude, the honour offered me by your young Hercules, the Maidstone Society, of being one of their corresponding members, I cannot indulge a hope of being a diligent or useful correspondent, unless any discovery should be made by our Indian Society, which I may think likely to be of use in our common country. Your various papers I have distributed among those who seemed the likeliest to avail themselves of the rules and hints which they contain. The rapidity of the Ganges makes it extremely difficult to rescue the unhappy persons who are overset in boats,

especially at the time of the *bore*,* when such accidents most usually happen ; but I am confident that the methods prescribed in the little work which you sent me, will often be salutary, even here. Dr. Johnson's tract I have now lent to a medical friend of great ability ; and I am particularly interested in the security of our prisons from infection, to which indeed they are less liable in this climate, from our practice of sleeping in a draught of air whenever it can be had. Without this habit, to which I am now inured, we should never be free from putrid disorders.

* * * *

Should your society be so extended as to admit all Kent, you will, I trust, have an excellent member in one of my oldest college friends, Dr. Breton, of Broughton, near Ashford, who has left no path of science or literature unexplored. We shall print our Transactions with all speed, consistent with accuracy ; but as all our members, including even our printer, are men of business, in commerce, revenue, or judicature, we cannot proceed very rapidly, either in giving the public the tracts we have already collected, or in adding to our collection.

• The *bore* is an expression applied to a peculiar swell in the Hughli river, occasioned by the rapid influx of the tide.

CXVIII.

To Sir John Macpherson, Bart.

Calcutta, Nov. 1786.

THE society heard, with pleasure, the curious account of the lama's inauguration; and the first sheet of their Transactions is printed.

* * * *

Be assured, that I will ever remember the contents of your own letter; and accept my thanks, for the pleasure which I have received from that of Mr. Adam Ferguson to you: one sentence of it is so wise, and so well expressed, that I read it till I had it by heart: "Justice to the stranger," &c.

I am correcting proofs of our Transactions, which will, I hope, satisfy Mr. Ferguson as to the theology of the Hindus. By rising before the sun, I allot an hour every day to Sanscrit, and am charmed with knowing so beautiful a sister of Latin and Greek.

* * * *

Magnum vectigal est parcimonia, is an aphorism which I learned early from Cicero. The public, if

they are grateful, must wish that you had attended as vigilantly to your own vantage, as you have wisely and successfully to theirs.

CXIX.

*To J. Shore, Esq.**

Gardens, near Calcutta, March 25, 1787.

I AM charmed, my dear sir, with the short but comprehensive work of Rhadacaunt, your pundit, the title of which I see is Purán-arthupracusam, or the meaning of the Purans displayed : it contains pedigrees, or lists of kings, from the earliest times to the decline of the Indian empire ; but the proper names are so murdered, or so strangely disguised in Persian letters, that I am only tantalized with a thirst for more accurate information. If the pundit, at your request, will lend me the original, my *Marhatta* writer shall copy it elegantly, with spaces between the lines for a literal English translation, which may perhaps be agreeable, with your consent, to our Society.

* The present lord Teignmouth, author of the Memoirs of sir William Jones.

CXX.

To J. Shore, Esq.

May 11, 1787.

I RETURN, with many thanks, my dear sir, the letter of his high mightiness Tatbu Arnu (king of Ava). When I began it, I feared it was hostile, but am glad to find it so amicable. *Dulce mihi nomen pacis!* If he is at peace with the Siamese, he may be a good neighbour, and we may be gainers by his gold and ivory: but I have no inclination to taste his sweet and delicious petroleum, which he praises so highly: I am satisfied with the smell of it, and with its singular property of restoring the scent of Russia leather.* I am told he is an able man; but from all I can learn, I suspect him to be an ambitious dog, who would act the lion if he could, and end, as he is said to have begun, the Aurenzeb of the Indian peninsula.

We are pretty well, and hope that you are now

* The letter of the king of Ava contains the following passage: "As there is an oil, the produce of a certain spot of the earth, of exquisite flavour, so is my dignity and power above that of other rajahs." The wells which produce this oil are in the vicinity of Rangoon, and have long been celebrated: their annual produce is estimated at 400,000 hogsheads.

in good health. You will not (though you dislike medicine) object to my prescription :

Take a concerto of Corelli,
—— an air of Leo, or Pergolesi,
—— a trio of Haydn, &c.—Mixtura fiat.

Would I could be as good a physician to you, as I am, &c.

CXXI.

To J. Shore, Esq.

May 12, 1787.

You have sent me a treasure, which will enable me to satisfy my mind at least on the chronology of India: need I say, that I shall ever be happy in the conversation of so learned a man as Rhadacaunt? Before I return to Calcutta, I shall have read his interesting book, and shall be better able to converse with him in Sanscrit, which I speak continually with my pundit.

I can easily conceive all your feelings; but consider, my dear friend, that you are now collecting for yourself (while you serve your country) those flowers which will give a brighter bloom even to the valleys of Devonshire; that you are young, and have as fair a prospect of long happiness as any mortal can have. I predict, that when I meet you

a few years hence at Teignmouth, where I hope to spend many a season with all that my soul cherishes in this world, I shall hear you confess, that your painful toil in India conduced in the end to your happiness. That you may enjoy as much of it as human life affords, is the sincere wish of, &c.

CXXII.

To J. Shore, Esq.

June 24.

* * * * *

* I am well, rising constantly between three and four, and usually walking two or three miles before sun-rise; my wife is tolerably well; and we only lament, that the damp weather will soon oblige us to leave our herds and flocks, and all our rural delights on the banks of the Baghiratti. The business of the court will continue at least two months longer, after which I purpose to take a house at Bandell or Hughli, and pass my autumnal vacation, as usual, with the Hindu bards. I have read your pundit's curious book twice in Sanscrit, and will have it elegantly copied; the *Dabistan* also I have read through twice with great attention; and both copies are ready to be returned, as you

shall direct.* Mr. R. Johnston thinks he has a young friend who will translate the *Dabistan*; and the greatest part of it would be very interesting to a curious reader; but some of it cannot be translated. It contains more recondite learning, more entertaining history, more beautiful specimens of poetry, more ingenuity and wit, more indecency and blasphemy, than I ever saw collected in a single volume: the two last are not the author's, but are introduced in the chapters on the heretics and infidels of India. On the whole, it is the most amusing and instructive book I ever read in Persian.

I hear nothing from Europe, but what all the papers contain; and that is enough to make me rejoice exceedingly, that I am in Asia. Those with whom I have spent some of my happiest hours, and hope to spend many more on my return to England, are tearing one another to pieces, with the enmity, that is proverbial here, of the snake and the ichneumon. I have nothing left, therefore, but to wish what is right and just may prevail, to discharge my public duties with unremitted attention, and to recreate myself at leisure with the literature of this interesting country.

* The *Dabistan* is a treatise on twelve different religions, composed by a Mohammedan traveller, a native of Cashmir, named *Mohsan*, but distinguished by the assumed name of *Fani*, or *perishable*.

CXXIII.

To J. Shore, Esq.

Crishna-nagur, August 16, 1787.

I THANK you heartily, my dear sir, for the tender strains of the unfortunate Charlotte,* which have given us pleasure and pain : the sonnets which relate to herself, are incomparably the best. Petrarca is little known ; his sonnets, especially the first book, are the least valuable of his works, and contain less natural sentiments than those of the swan of Avon ; but his odes, which are political, are equal to the lyric poems of the Greeks ; and his triumphs are in a triumphant strain of sublimity and magnificence. Anna Maria gives you many thanks for the pleasure you have procured her. We are in love with this pastoral cottage ; but though these three months are called a vacation, yet I have no vacant hours. It rarely happens that favourite studies are closely connected with the strict discharge of our duty, as mine happily are : even in this cottage I am assisting the court by studying Arabic and Sanscrit, and have now rendered it an

* Sonnets by Charlotte Smith.

impossibility for the Mohammedan or Hindu lawyers to impose upon us with erroneous opinions.

This brings to my mind your honest pundit, Rhadacaunt, who refused, I hear, the office of pundit to the court, and told Mr. Hastings that he would not accept of it, if the salary were doubled: his scruples were probably religious; but they would put it out of my power to serve him, should the office again be vacant. His unvarnished tale I would have repeated to you, if we had not missed one another on the river; but since I despair of seeing you until my return to Calcutta, at the end of October, I will set it down here, as nearly as I can recollect, in his own words:

“My father,” said he, “died at the age of an hundred years, and my mother, who was eighty years old, became a *sati*, and burned herself to expiate sins: they left me little besides good principles. Mr. Hastings purchased for me a piece of land, which at first yielded twelve hundred rupees a year; but lately, either through my inattention, or through accident, it has produced only one thousand. This would be sufficient for me and my family; but the duty of Brahmans is not only to teach the youths of their sect, but to relieve those who are poor. I made many presents to poor scholars and others in distress, and for this purpose I anticipated my income: I was then obliged to borrow for my family expenses; and I now owe about three thousand rupees. This debt is my only cause of uneasiness in this world. I would have mentioned it to Mr. Shore, but I was ashamed.”

Now the question is, how he can be set upon his

legs again, when I hope he will be more prudent. If Bahman * should return to Persia, I can afford to give him one hundred rupees a month, till his debt shall be discharged out of his rents; but, at present, I pay more in salaries to my native scholars than I can well afford: nevertheless, I will cheerfully join you in any mode of clearing the honest man, that can be suggested; and I would assist him merely for his own sake, as I have more Brahmanical teachers than I can find time to hear.

I send you, not an elegant pathetic sonnet, but the wildest and strangest poem that was ever written—Khakani's complaint in prison. The whole is a menace, that he would change his religion, and seek protection among the Christians, or the Gabres. It contains one or two proper names, of which I find no full explanation even in a commentary professedly written to illustrate the poem.

The fire of Khakani's genius blazes through the smoke of his erudition: the measure of the poem, which will enable you to correct the errors of the copies, is,

| ~ - - - | ~ - - - | ~ - - - |
 | ~ - - - | ~ - - - | ~ - - - |

with a strong accent on the last syllable of each foot. Adieu, my dear sir, &c.

* A parsi, and native of Yezd, employed by sir W. Jones as a reader.

CXXIV.

*To Jos. Cowper Walker, Esq.**

Crishna-nagur, Sept. 11, 1787.

I GIVE you my hearty thanks, dear sir, for your kind attention to me, and for the pleasure which I have received from your letter, as well as for that which I certainly shall receive from your Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards. The Term being over before your book could be found, and the state of my health obliging me to seek this pastoral retreat, where I always pass my vacation among the Brahmans of this ancient university—I left Calcutta before I could read your work, but shall peruse it with eagerness on my return to the capital. You touched an important string, when you mentioned the subject of Indian music, of which I am particularly fond. I have just read a very old book on that art in Sanscrit: I hope to present the world with the substance of it, as soon as the Transactions of our Society can be printed: but we go on slowly, since the press is often engaged by government; and we think it better to let our fruit ripen naturally, than to bring forth such watery and imperfect fruits as

* Of Valeri, Bray, Ireland, author of Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards.

are usually raised in hot-beds. The Asiatic Miscellany, to which you allude, is not the publication of our Society, who mean to print no scraps, nor any mere translations: it was the undertaking of a private gentleman, and will certainly be of use in diffusing Oriental literature, though it has not been so correctly printed as I could wish. When you see colonel Vallancy, whose learned work I have read through twice with great pleasure, I request you to present him with my best remembrance. We shall soon, I hope, see faithful translations of Irish histories and poems: I shall be happy in comparing them with the Sanscrit, with which the ancient language of Ireland had certainly an affinity. Proceed, sir, in your laudable career: you deserve the applause of your country; and will most assuredly have that of, sir, &c.

CXXV.

To Dr. Patrick Russel.

Crishna-nagur, Sept. 22, 1787.

YOUR interesting papers did not find their way to me till I had left this cottage, and was wholly immersed in business. Indeed, I am so harassed for eight months in twelve, that I can seldom think of literature till the autumn vacation, which I pass in this charming plain, the driest

in Bengal, and close to a college of Brahmans. I am charmed with your plan; and if the directors have not yet resolved to print the work at their expense, I can perhaps suggest a mode of procuring very powerful influence with them. The king has much at heart his new botanical garden at St. Vincent's: his object is two-fold; to improve the commerce of the West-India islands, and to provide the British troops on service there with medicinal plants. Now, if you could send a box or two of seeds, likely to be useful in commerce or medicine, directed to sir George Young, the secretary at war (to whom I have enclosed your letter to the Board at Madras) I dare say the Board of Control would be desired to use their influence with the directors.

* * * * * You could not have chosen a better specimen than the *pedalium murex*, of which little is said by Linnæus, and that from doubtful authority. The *opuntia* I have not seen here, and I cannot ramble into the woods.—Our groves at this place are skirted with an angulated *cactus*, called *sija* (pronounced *seeja*) in the Sanscrit dictionaries, where I find the names of about 300 medicinal plants, the virtues of which are mentioned in medicinal books. I agree with you, that those books do not carry full conviction; but they lead to useful experiments, and are therefore valuable. I made fine red ink, by dropping a solution of tin in *aqua regia* into an infusion of the *coccus*, which Dr. Anderson was so polite as to send to me. His discovery will, I trust, be useful; his ardour and ingenuity deserve success.

I have just read with attention the *Philosophia Botanica*, which I consider as the grammar,

and the *Genera et Species* as the dictionary, of botany : it is a masterly work, and contains excellent matter in a short volume ; but it is harshly, not to say barbarously, written. I grieve to see botany imperfect in its two most important articles, the natural orders and the virtues of plants, between which I suspect a strong affinity. I envy those who have leisure to pursue this bewitching study.

Pray, my dear sir, have you the Oriental manuscripts of my friend Dr. Alexander Russel ? He sent me three, which I returned : the *Sucardan*, the *Banquet of Physicians*, and a beautiful *Hafez*. If you have them, I shall beg leave to read them again, when we meet in Europe.

P.S. What is spikenard ? I mean botanically, what is the natural order, class, genus, &c. of the plant ? What was the spikenard in the alabaster-box of the Gospel ? What was *nardi parvus onyx* ? What did Ptolemy mean by the excellent nard of Rhangamutty in Bengal ? I have been in vain endeavouring, for above two years, to procure an answer to these questions : your answer will greatly oblige me.

CXXVI.

To Thomas Caldicott, Esq.

Crishna-nagur, Sept. 27, 1787.

YOUR brother sent me your letter at a convenient time, and to a convenient place ; for I can only write in the long vacation, which I generally spend in a delightful cottage, about as far from Calcutta as Oxford is from London, and close to an ancient university of Brahmans, with whom I now converse familiarly in Sanscrit. You would be astonished at the resemblance between that language and both Greek and Latin. Sanscrit and Arabic will enable me to do this country more essential service, than the introduction of arts, (even if I should be able to introduce them) by procuring an accurate digest of Hindu and Mohammedan laws, which the natives hold sacred, and by which both justice and policy require that they should be governed.

I have published nothing ; but Armenian clerks make such blunders, that I print ten or twenty copies of every thing I compose, which are to be considered as manuscripts. I beg you will send me your remarks on my plan of an epic poem. Sanscrit has engaged my vacations lately : but I will finish it, if I live. I promise you to attend to all that is said,

especially if alterations are suggested ; always reserving to myself the final judgment. One thing I am inflexible in : I have maturely considered the point, and am resolved to write in blank verse. I have not time to add my reasons ; but they are good.

I thank you for Sheridan's speech, which I could not however read through. For the last sixteen years of my life, I have been in a habit of requiring evidence of all assertions, and I have no leisure to examine proofs in a business so foreign to my pursuits. * * * * *

If Hastings and Impey are guilty, in God's name, let them be punished ; but let them not be condemned without legal evidence. I will say more of myself than you do of yourself, but in few words : I never was unhappy in England ; it was not in my nature to be so ; but I never was happy till I was settled in India. My constitution has overcome the climate ; and if I could say the same of my beloved wife, I should be the happiest of men : but she has perpetual complaints, and of course I am in perpetual anxiety on her account.

CXXVII.

To John Wilmot, Esq.

Crishna-nagur, Bengal, Oct. 3, 1787.

* * * * *
* * * I cannot, however, let the season slip without scribbling a few lines to tell you, that my constitution seems to have overcome the climate, and that I should be as happy as mortal man can be, or at least ought to be, if my wife had been as well as I have for the last three years.

I have nothing to say of India politics, except that Lord Cornwallis and * * * are justly popular, and perhaps the most virtuous governors in the world. Of English politics I say nothing, because I doubt whether you and I should ever agree in them : I do not mean the narrow politics of contending parties, but the great principles of government and legislation, the majesty of the whole nation collectively, and the consistency of popular rights with regal prerogative, which ought to be supported, to suppress the oligarchical power. But in India I think little of these matters,

CXXVIII.

To J. Shore, Esq.

Crishna-nagur, Oct. 10, 1787.

I HOPE, in less than a fortnight, to see you in perfect health, as I shall leave this charming retreat on the 20th. I want but a few leaves of having read your copy of Hafez twice through ; and I am obliged to you for the most agreeable task (next the Shah-naméh) I ever performed. The annexed elegy* was

• The elegy alluded to is the following:—

PHILEMON.—AN ELEGY.

Where shade yon yews the church-yard's lonely bourn,
 With faltering step, absorb'd in thought profound,
 Philemon wends in solitude to mourn,
 While Evening pours her deepening glooms around.

Loud shrieks the blast ; the sleety torrent drives ;
 Wide spreads the tempest's desolating power ;
 To grief alone, Philemon reckless lives ;
 No rolling peal he heeds, cold blast, nor shower.

For this the date that stamp'd his partner's doom ;
 His trembling lips received her latest breath,
 " Ah ! wilt thou drop one tear on Emma's tomb ?"
 She cried ; and closed each wistful eye in death.

No sighs he breathed, for anguish rived his breast ;
 Her clay-cold hand he grasp'd ; no tears he shed ;
 Till fainting nature sunk, by grief oppress'd,
 And ere distraction came, all sense was fled.

sent to me by the post ; and I send it to you, because I think you will like it. There is a great pathos in the fourth tetrastick ; and I know, unhappily, that excessive grief is neither full of tears, nor full of words ; yet if a dramatic poet were to represent such grief naturally, I doubt whether his conduct would be approved, though, with fine acting and fine sounds in the orchestra, it ought to have a wonderful effect. Lady J. is pretty well ; a tiger, about a month old, who is suckled by a goat, and has all the gentleness of his foster-mother, is now playing at her feet : I call him Jupiter.—Adieu.

CXXIX.

To Dr. Ford.

Gardens, on the Ganges, Jan. 5, 1788.

GIVE me leave to recommend to your kind attentions colonel Polier, who will deliver this to you at Oxford. He presents to the university an extremely rare work in Sanscrit, a copy of the four *vedas*, or Indian scriptures, which confirm, instead of opposing, the Mosaic account of the creation and of

Now time has calm'd, not cured, Philemon's woe ;

For grief like his, life-woven, never dies ;

And still each year's collected sorrows flow,

As drooping o'er his Emma's tomb he sighs.

the deluge. He is himself one of the best-disposed and best-informed men, who ever left India. If he embark to-morrow, I shall not be able to send you, by him, an Arabic manuscript, which I have read with a native of Mecca, the poems of the great Ali.

* * * * *

Our return to Europe is very distant ; but I hope, before the end of the eighteenth century, to have the pleasure of conversing with you, and to give you a good account of Persia, through which I purpose to return.

CXXX.

To Sir Joseph Banks.

Gardens, near Calcutta, Feb. 25, 1788.

I WAS highly gratified by your kind letter, and have diffused great pleasure among our astronomers here, by showing them an account of the lunar volcano. The Brahmans, to whom I have related the discovery, in Sanscrit, are highly delighted with it. Public business presses on me so heavily at this season, that I must postpone the pleasure of writing fully to you, till I can retire in the long vacation to my cottage, where I hear nothing of plaintiffs or defendants. Your second commission I will faith-

fully execute, and have already made inquiries concerning the *dacca cotton*; but I shall be hardly able to procure the seeds, &c. before the Rodney sails.

* * * * *

CXXXI.

To Marquis Cornwallis, the Governor-General.

MY LORD,

IT has long been my wish to address the government of the British dominions in India on the administration of justice among the natives of Bengal and Bahar; a subject of equal importance to the appellate jurisdiction of the supreme court at Calcutta, where the judges are required by the legislature to decide controversies between Hindu and Mohammedan parties, according to their respective laws of contracts, and of succession to property: they had, I believe, so decided them, in most cases, before the statute to which, I allude, had passed; and the parliament only confirmed that mode of decision, which the obvious principles of justice had led them before to adopt. Nothing indeed could be more obviously just, than to determine private contests according to those laws, which the parties themselves had ever considered as the rules of their conduct and engagements in civil life; nor could any thing be wiser, than, by a legislative act, to assure the Hindu and Mussulman subjects of

Great Britain, that the private laws which they severally held sacred, and a violation of which they would have thought the most grievous oppression, should not be superseded by a new system, of which they could have no knowledge, and which they must have considered as imposed on them by a spirit of rigour and intolerance.

So far the principle of decision between the native parties in a cause appears perfectly clear; but the difficulty lies (as in most other cases) in the application of the principle to practice; for the Hindu and Mussulman laws are locked up, for the most part, in two very difficult languages, Sanscrit and Arabic, which few Europeans will ever learn, because neither of them leads to any advantage in worldly pursuits: and if we give judgment only from the opinions of the native lawyers and scholars, we can never be sure that we have not been deceived by them.

It would be absurd and unjust to pass an indiscriminate censure on so considerable a body of men; but my experience justifies me in declaring, that I could not, with an easy conscience, concur in a decision, merely on the written opinion of native lawyers, in any cause in which they could have the remotest interest in misleading the court; nor, how vigilant soever we might be, would it be very difficult for them to mislead us; for a single obscure text, explained by themselves, might be quoted as express authority, though, perhaps, in the very book from which it was selected, it might be differently explained, or introduced only for the purpose of being exploded. The obvious remedy for this evil had occurred to me before I left England, where I had communicated my sentiments to some friends

in parliament, and on the bench in Westminster-hall, of whose discernment I had the highest opinion; and those sentiments I propose to unfold in this letter, with as much brevity as the magnitude of the subject will admit.

If we had a complete digest of Hindu and Moham-
medan laws, after the model of Justinian's in-
estimable Pandects, compiled by the most learned
of the native lawyers, with an accurate verbal
translation of it into English; and if copies of the
work were deposited in the proper offices of the
Sedr Divani Adaulat,* and of the supreme court,
that they might occasionally be consulted as a
standard of justice—we should rarely be at a loss for
principles at least, and rules of law applicable to
the cases before us; and should never perhaps be
led astray by the pundits or maulavis, who would
hardly venture to impose on us, when their im-
position might so easily be detected. The great
work, of which Justinian has the credit, consists
of texts collected from law books of approved
authority, which in his time were extant at Rome;
and those texts are digested according to a scienti-
fical analysis—the names of the original authors,
and the titles of their several books, being con-
stantly cited, with references even to the parts of
their works from which the different passages were
selected: but although it comprehends the whole
system of jurisprudence, public, private, and cri-
minal, yet that vast compilation was finished, we
are told, in three years: it bears marks, unques-
tionably, of great precipitation, and of a desire to

* The court of appeals in civil suits.

gratify the emperor by quickness of dispatch ; but, with all its imperfections, it is a most valuable mine of judicial knowledge ; it gives law, at this hour, to the greatest part of Europe ; and, though few English lawyers dare make such an acknowledgment, it is the true source of nearly all our English laws, that are not of a feudal origin. It would not be unworthy of a British government, to give the natives of these Indian provinces a permanent security for the due administration of justice among them, similar to that which Justinian gave to his Greek and Roman subjects : but our compilation would require far less labour, and might be completed with far greater exactness, in as short a time, since it would be confined to the laws of contracts and inheritances, which are of the most extensive use in private life, and to which the legislature has limited the decisions of the supreme court, in causes between native parties : the labour of the work would also be greatly diminished by two compilations already made in Sanscrit and Arabic, which approach nearly, in merit and in method, to the digest of Justinian : the first was composed, a few centuries ago, by a Brahman of this province, named Raghu-nanden, and is comprised in twenty-seven books at least, on every branch of Hindu law : the second, which the Arabs called the Indian Decisions, is known here by the title of Fetaweh Aalemgiri, and was compiled by the order of Aurangzeb, in five large volumes, of which I possess a perfect and well-collated copy. To translate these immense works, would be superfluous labour ; but they will greatly facilitate the compilation of a digest on the laws of inheritance and contracts ; and the code, as it is

called, of Hindu law, which was compiled at the request of Mr. Hastings, will be useful for the same purpose, though it by no means obviates the difficulties before stated, nor supersedes the necessity or the expedience at least of a more ample repertory of Hindu laws, especially on the twelve different contracts to which Ulpian has given specific names; and on all the others, which, though not specifically named, are reducible to four general heads. The last-mentioned work is entitled *Vivadamavasetu*, and consists, like the Roman digests, of authentic texts, with the names of their several authors regularly prefixed to them, and explained, (where an explanation is requisite) in short notes, taken from commentaries of high authority: it is, as far as it goes, a very excellent work; but though it appear extremely diffuse on subjects rather curious than useful, and though the chapter on inheritances be copious and exact—yet the other important branch of jurisprudence, the law of contracts, is very succinctly and superficially discussed, and bears an inconsiderable proportion to the rest of the work. But whatever be the merit of the original, the translation of it has no authority, and is of no other use than to suggest inquiries on the many dark passages which we find in it: properly speaking, indeed, we cannot call it a translation; for though Mr. Halhed performed his part with fidelity, yet the Persian interpreter had supplied him only with a loose injudicious epitome of the original Sanscrit, in which abstract many essential passages are omitted; though several notes of little consequence are interpolated, from a vain idea of elucidating or improving the text. All this I say with confidence;

having already perused no small part of the original with a learned pundit, comparing it, as I proceeded, with the English version. Having shown, therefore, the expedience of a new compilation for each system of Indian law, I beg leave to state the difficulties which must attend the work, and to suggest the means of removing them.

The difficulty which first presents itself, is the expense of paying the pundits and maulavis who must compile the digest, and the native writers who must be employed to transcribe it. Since two provinces are immediately under this government, in each of which there are many customary laws, it would be proper to employ one pundit of Bengal and another from Bahar; and since there are two Mohammedan sects, who differ in regard to many traditions from their prophet, and to some decisions of their respective doctors; it might be thought equally proper to engage one maulavi of each sect: and this mode would have another advantage; since two lawyers, conferring freely together on fundamental principles common to both, would assist, direct, and check each other.*

Although I can have no personal interest, immediate or consequential, in the work proposed, yet I would cheerfully have borne the whole expense of it, if common prudence had not restrained me, and if my private establishment of native readers and writers, which I cannot with convenience discontinue at present, did not require more than half of the monthly expense, which the completion of a

* A passage, relating to the remuneration of the natives to be employed, is here omitted.

digest would, in my opinion, demand : I am under a necessity, therefore, of intimating, that if the work be thought expedient, the charges of it should be defrayed by the government, and the salaries paid by their officers. The second difficulty is, to find a director of the work, and a translator of it, who, with a competent knowledge of the Sanscrit and Arabic, has a general acquaintance with the principles of jurisprudence, and a sufficient share even of legislative spirit, to arrange the plan of a digest, superintend the compilation of it, and render the whole, as it proceeds, into perspicuous English ; so that even the translation may acquire a degree of authority proportioned to the public opinion of his accuracy. Now, though I am truly conscious of possessing a very moderate portion of those talents which I should require in the superintendent of such a work ; yet I may, without vanity, profess myself equal to the labour of it ; and though I would much rather see the work well conducted by any man than myself, yet I would rather give myself the trouble of it, than not live to see it conducted at all ; and I cannot but know, that the qualifications required, even in the low degree in which I possess them, are not often found united in the same person, for a reason before suggested. If your lordship, therefore, after full consideration of the subject, shall be of opinion, that a digest of Hindu and Mohammedan laws would be a work of national honour and utility—I so cherish both, that I offer the nation my humble labour, as far as I can dispose of my time consistently with the faithful discharge of my duty as a magistrate. Should this offer be accepted, I should then request your lord-

ship to nominate the pundits and maulavis, to whom I would severally give a plan conformable to the best analysis that I could make; and I should be able, if my health continued firm, to translate every morning, before any other business is begun, as much as they could compile, and the writers copy, in the preceding day. The Dhermasastra, or sacred code of the Hindus, consists of eighteen books, the first of which would, in any age or nation, be thought a wonderful performance: both the first and second have excellent commentaries of great authority; but the other sixteen are too easy to need elucidation: the works of Menu, of Yagyawalcia, and most of the others, are in blank verse, but that of Gautam is in modulated prose: besides these, the Hindus have many standard law-tracts, with their several commentaries, and among them a fine treatise on inheritances by Jemutavahan, to which our pundits often refer; though, on that subject, the work of Raghunanden seems to be more generally approved in this province. The Mussulmans, besides a few general rules in the Coran, and a number of traditional maxims delivered from their prophet and his companions, through the sages of their law; together with the opinions of the celebrated lawyers, preserved by their disciples—have two incomparable little tracts; one by Surajuddin, and the other by Alkuduri; the former on succession only, and the other on contracts; also with comments on each, and other comments on them—not to mention some other tracts of acknowledged authority, and large collections of decision in particular cases. All these books may, I suppose, be procured with ease; and some of the most rare among

them are in my possession : mine I would lend, with pleasure, to the pundits and maulavis, if they happened to be unprovided with good copies of them ; and my example would, I persuade myself, be followed, on such an occasion, by other collectors of Eastern manuscripts, both natives and Europeans. This is all that appears necessary to be written on the subject, with which I began this address to your lordship : I could not have expressed myself more concisely without some obscurity ; and to have enlarged on the technical plan of the work which I have proposed, would have been superfluous.*

I have the honour to be, &c.

WILLIAM JONES.

Calcutta, March 19, 1788.

* A proposal, such as the letter of sir William Jones contains, could not fail of receiving that attention which it merited. The marquis Cornwallis directed an answer to be written to sir William Jones, expressive of his satisfaction concerning it, and stating, that he deemed it singularly fortunate, that a person, so eminently qualified for the task, should, from principles of general benevolence and public spirit, be induced to engage in an undertaking, as arduous as it was beneficial.

CXXXII.

To J. Shore, Esq.

Feb. 7, 1783.

I AVAIL myself of an hour's leisure, to throw upon paper a few thoughts on the subject of our late conference,* concerning an application to the legislature, for a power of *summary conviction and punishment* in Calcutta.

The concurrence or dissent of an individual, who is not a member of an executive government, ought to have so little weight, that I would not have obtruded my opinion, if it had not been asked ; but it would ill become me to concur in an application to parliament, for a power, the granting of which, if I were myself in parliament, I should hold it my duty to oppose.

The difficulty, of which we all seemed sensible, arises from a supposed necessity of deviating from the spirit and form of English judicature in criminal cases : yet the English form has been approved by the wisdom of a thousand years, and has been found effectual in the great cities of England,

* This was a conference between the executive government of Bengal and the judges, relative to the police at Calcutta, which wanted great reformation.

for the good order and government of the most high-minded, active, and restless people that exists on earth.

I could easily demonstrate, that the criminal code of our nation is fully sufficient to punish every temporal wrong, and redress every temporal evil, that can injure the public or individuals; and a British tribunal, for punishment of religious offences by Hindus or Mussulmans, would not only be an inquisition of the most extraordinary kind, but would, I am persuaded, be offensive in the beginning, and oppressive in the end, to the natives of both religions.

The question is then reduced to this—Is it absolutely necessary to convict and punish offenders in Calcutta without a jury? If it be, we must follow the example of Solon, who enacted such laws as were, though not the best in themselves, yet the best that circumstances would admit. I am not convinced that such a necessity exists, and strongly incline to think it does not. The evil to be remedied, is the small number of magistrates; the obvious remedy is, to appoint a greater number. If the legislature, therefore, would give the governor in council a power to appoint from six to twelve justices of the peace, those justices would (under the direction of government) appoint subordinate peace-officers, whose legal powers are very considerable, yet accurately defined; but a superintendent of the police is an officer unknown to our system, borrowed from a foreign system, or at least suggesting the idea of a foreign constitution; and his powers being dark and undefined, are those which our law most abhors. The justices would hold a session every quarter of a year, without

troubling the members of government, who have other avocations ; so that in every year there would be six sessions for administering criminal justice : but then comes the great question, How could the juries be supplied, without injury to those who should sit on them ? Now, without urging that some occasional trouble, and perhaps loss, are the fine which Englishmen pay for their freedom ; without intimating, that, but a few years ago, an application to parliament was made, among other objects, for a trial by jury in all cases, even in Calcutta ; without contending, that if summary convictions be once made palatable, we should gradually lose our relish for the admirable mode of trial, on which our common liberties at home almost wholly depend ; without rambling a moment from the point before us—I conceive that three hundred persons, qualified to serve on petty juries, would be far more than sufficient to divide the trouble, with convenience to themselves, and benefit to the community.

On the whole, the annual burthen on each individual, especially if a kind of rotation were observed, or even if the chance of a ballot were taken, would be too inconsiderable to weigh a feather against the important object of supporting so excellent a mode of trial.

After all, are we sure that the British subjects in Calcutta would be better pleased than myself with any slur upon the constitutional trial by jury ? and as to the natives, besides the policy of allowing them all the beneficial effects of our judicature, (and that a trial by twelve men, instead of one, with a power of exceptions, is a benefit, must be

granted by all) I rather think that the inhabitants of a British town, owing local allegiance, are entitled to the local advantage of being tried by a British form. In all events, if it be a benefit, they ought not to be deprived of it, without some greater public good to compensate the private injustice, than would result, I apprehend, from the power of summary conviction, if it were exercised by men, whose monthly gains would depend on the number of complaints made, and of fines levied.

I am confident, therefore, after mature deliberation, that nothing more is to be desired than a power in this government of appointing justices of peace by annual commissions; and these being my sentiments, I rely on your friendship, so long and so constantly manifested, that if it should be thought proper to mention the concurrence of the judges, you will remember that their concurrence was not unanimous.

I could easily have said all this and more; but I chose this mode, through delicacy, and fear of giving pain. Farewell; and as I esteem you, so esteem, dear sir, your ever affectionate, &c.

CXXXIII.

To J. Shore, Esq.

Gardens, 1788.

I THANK you heartily, my dear sir, for every part of your letter, and for your strings of Oriental gems—both for the *durr* and the *shebeh* :* the *pearls* appear with more lustre by the side of the *beads*.

Your quotations from the elegies of Washi are sweetly pathetic : but I will not detain your servant by more observations. Sacontala will hardly be finished before I go to my cottage : happy shall I be if your occupations allow you to pass a few days near it. Adieu.

CXXXIV.

To J. Shore, Esq.

Gardens, 1788.

THE verses are worthy of Catullus, and in his manner ; they would appear well in *hendecasyllables*.

* An Oriental expression for *prose and verse*.

I will think, at some leisure moment, of giving them a Persian dress, according to your hints. I rejoice that you have it in your power to relieve your mind by poetical imagery : it is the true use of the fine arts.

I have been reading cases for a judgment on Tuesday, from nine o'clock till past two.

Farewell.

CXXXV.

To Dr. Patrick Russel.

Crishna-nagur, Sept. 24, 1788.

I HAVE acted like those libertines, who defer repentance till the hour of death, and then find that they have not time to repent. Thus I deferred the pleasure of answering letters till the vacation ; but found the term and session so long, that I have scarcely any vacation at all : I must, therefore, write very laconically, thanking you heartily for your kind letters, and very curious papers in natural history, wishing that the public may soon gather the fruit of your learned labours.

The business of the court this year has left me no leisure to examine flowers at Crishna-nagur. The *sija* is never in blossom when I am here ; but though it has something of the form of the *cactus*,

yet I imagine, from the milk of it, that it is an *euphorbia*.

With all my exertions, I cannot procure any fresh spikenard; but I will not desist. I have two native physicians in my family, but they have only seen it in a dry state.

I am very sorry to find that you are leaving us, as I have no chance of seeing Europe till the end of the eighteenth century. I wish you and your brother, and his family, a prosperous and speedy voyage. It is impossible for me to write more than, *Vive, vale!*

CXXXVI.

To Thomas Caldicott, Esq.

Sept. 24, 1788.

WE have had incessant labour for six hours a day, for three whole months, in the hot season between the tropics; and, what is a sad consequence of long sittings, we have scarcely any vacation: I can therefore only write to you a few lines this autumn. Before your brother sent me Lewisdon Hill, I had read it twice aloud to different companies, with great delight to myself and to them: thank the author in my name. I believe his nameless rivulet is called *Bret*, or *Brit*, (whence *Bridport*) by Michael Drayton, who describes the fruitful Marsh-wood.

* * * *

Pray assure all who care for me, or whom I am likely to care for, that I never, directly or indirectly, asked for the succession to sir E. Impey; and that, if any indiscreet friend of mine has asked for it in my name, the request was not made by my desire, and never would have been made with my assent.

“ Co' magnanimi pōchi, a chi 'l ben piace,”

I have enough; but if I had not, I think an ambitious judge a very dishonourable and mischievous character. Besides, I never would have opposed sir R. Chambers, who has been my friend twenty-five years, and wants money, which I do not.

I have fixed on the year 1800 for my return towards Europe, if I live so long; and hope to begin the new century auspiciously among my friends in England.

P. S. Since I wrote my letter, I have amused myself with composing the annexed ode to Abundance.* It took up ten or twelve hours to compose and copy it; but I must now leave poetry, and return, for ten months, to J. N. and J. S.

* See Sir W. Jones's Works, vol. vi.

CXXXVII.

To George Hardinge, Esq.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Sept. 24, 1788.

I AM the worst, and you the best correspondent; and I make but a pitiful return for your two kind letters, by assuring you, that I find it impossible to answer them fully this season. My eyes were always weak, and the glare of an Indian sky has not strengthened them; the little day-light I can therefore spare from my public duties, I must allot to studies connected with them; I mean the systems of Indian jurisprudence, and the two abstruse languages in which the Hindu and Mussulman laws are written. * * * *

Anna Maria is pretty well, and I am consequently happy: my own health is firm, and, excepting the state of hers, I have all the happiness a mortal ought to have.

CXXXVIII.

To W. Shipley, Esq.

Sept. 27, 1788.

* * * * * My
own health, by God's blessing, is firm, but my eyes are weak ; and I am so intent upon seeing the digest of Indian laws completed, that I devote my leisure almost entirely to that object: the natives are much pleased with the work ; but it is only a preliminary to the security which I hope to see established among our Asiatic subjects.

The business of our society is rather an amusement than a labour to me : they have, as yet, published nothing ; but have materials for two quarto volumes ; and will, I hope, send one to Europe next spring. I lament the sad effects of party, or rather faction, in your Maidstone society, but hope (to use a word of Dr. Johnson), that it will redintegrate. Many thanks for the Transactions of your London Society, which I have lent to a very learned and ingenious friend, who is much pleased with them.

CXXXIX.

To J. Burnett, Lord Monboddo.

Sept. 24, 1788.

THE questions concerning India, which you do me the honour to think me capable of answering, require a longer answer than the variety of my present occupations allow me to write. Suffer me therefore to enclose a discourse, not yet published, which may give you some satisfaction on Indian literature; and to refer you to the first volume of the Transactions of our Society, which will, I hope, be sent next season to Europe. As my principal object is the jurisprudence, I have not yet examined the philosophy of the Brahmans; but I have seen enough of it to be convinced, that the doctrines of the Vidanti school are Platonic.

CXL.

To J. Shore, Esq.

Jan. 26, 1789.

LET me trouble you, as you see colonel Kyd oftener than I do, to give him sir George Young's botanical letter, which I annex. I have requested colonel

Martin to send sir George all the seeds which he can collect, and will co-operate (as far as my occupations will allow) in the plan of transferring to the West-Indies, the spicy forests of Asia: but I have little time at command; and, holding every engagement sacred, I must devote my leisure to the system of Asiatic jurisprudence, which I will see established before I see Europe: it will properly follow your wise and humane design of giving security to the property of the natives. When you have had a copy taken of the Persian Hermit,* I shall be glad to borrow it, that my *munshi* may transcribe it. Could you not find some leisure hour to explain an episode of Homer to Serajélhak, that he might try his hand with it?

CXLI.

To J. Shore, Esq.

1789.

FLEMING† still keeps me a prisoner, and forbids my reading aloud, which used to be my chief amusement in the evening. I trust you will soon be well, and that we shall ere long meet. If the

* A Persian poem, composed on the subject of Parnel's Hermit.

† His medical attendant.

man you mention be guilty, I hope he will be punished : I hate favouritism ; and if I had the dominions of Chingis Khan, I would not have one favourite.

* * * * *

The poem of Washi has greatly delighted me ; it almost equals Metastasio's on a similar subject, and far surpasses other *Wasukts** which I have seen ; yet the beautiful simplicity of the old Arabs, in their short elegies, appears unrivalled by any thing in Persian : I transcribe one of them, which I have just read in the Hamasa.†

Cease, fruitless tears ! afflicted bosom, rest !
My tears obey, but not my wounded breast.
Ah, no ! this heart, despairing and forlorn,
Till time itself shall end, must bleed and mourn.

* *Wasukt*, the appellation of an amatory elegy, descriptive of the various sensations and passions excited by love.

† The original is omitted.

CXLII.

To Mr. Justice Hyde.

June 5, 1789.

THOUGH I do not wish to give you the pain of sympathising, (as I know you will sympathise) with me in my present distress ; yet, as you possibly know it, and as you might think me unusually dejected when we meet, I cannot forbear writing to you ; especially, as I feel a kind of relief in venting my sorrow to an approved friend. One or two English papers mention the death of lady Jones's father, in such a manner, as to leave me no hope of its being a mistake : this I have known since the 15th of May ; but as it may possibly be untrue, I could not, in any degree, prepare her for the dreadful intelligence : I have therefore taken effectual measures to keep it secret from her ; but it is a secret which cannot long be kept ; and the bare idea of the pang, which she too soon must feel, and the probable effects of that pang on her delicate constitution, now particularly enervated by the hot season, give me a degree of anguish, which I never before felt. Mr. Shore has kindly promised to take care, that all her letters by the Indiamen shall be sent in a sealed packet to me, that I may select for her first perusal

the letter from her wisest friend, the dowager lady Spencer, whose hand-writing I cannot mistake : I wish I could suppress them all, but that is impossible. The pain of losing our parents, time, and time only, will mitigate ; but my dread is, that the first shock will have some terrible effect on her health, and this fear haunts me night and day. That your letters may contain the most comfortable news, and that I may see you on Wednesday in perfect health, is the hearty wish of,

My dear sir, your faithful and affectionate

WILLIAM JONES.

CXLIII.

To J. Shore, Esq.

June 9, 1789.

* * * * *

I AM glad Jayadeva* pleases you, and thank you for the sublime period of Hooker ; of which I had only before seen the first part : his idea of heavenly and eternal law is just and noble ; and human law, as derived from it, must partake of the praise, as far as it is perfectly administered ; but *corruptio op-*

* Gitagovinda, or the songs of Jayadeva.—See sir W. Jones's Works, vol. i.

timi fit pessima, and if the administration of law should ever be corrupted, some future philosopher or orator will thus exhibit the reverse of the medal :

“Of Law, there can be no more acknowledged, than that her seat is the store-house of quirks, her voice the dissonance of brawls ; all her followers, indeed, both at the bar and below it, pay her homage ; the very least as gaining their share, and the greatest as hoping for wealth and fame : but kings, nobles, and people, of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all have uniformly found their patience exhausted by her delays, and their purse by her boundless demands.” *

* * * * * The parody was so obvious, that I could not refrain from showing you the wrong side of the tapestry, with the same figures and flowers, but all maimed and discoloured.

* The following is the passage in Hooker, alluded to by sir W. Jones :

“Of Law, there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world : all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power ; both angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy.”

CXLIV.

To J. Shore, Esq.

1789.

WE have finished the twentieth and last book of Guicciardini's History, the most authentic, I believe (may I add, I fear ?) that ever was composed. I believe it, because the historian was an actor in his terrible drama, and personally knew the principal performers in it ; and I fear it, because it exhibits the woful picture of society in the 15th and 16th centuries. If you can spare Reid, we are now ready for him, and will restore his two volumes on our return from Crishna-nagur.

When we meet, I will give you an account of my progress in detecting a most impudent fraud, in forging a Sanscrit book on oaths, by Hindus, since I saw you. The book has been brought to me, on a few yellow Bengal leaves, apparently modern. The Brahman, who brought it from Sambhu Chaudra Rai, said it was twelve years old ; I believe it had not been written twelve days. He said, the original work of Mahadeva himself, from which the prohibition of swearing by the water of the Ganges was extracted, was at Crishna-nagur. I desired him to tell Sambhu Chaudra, who wants

me to admit him a suitor *in formâ pauperis*, without taking his oath, that unless he brought me the original, and that apparently ancient, I should be convinced that he meant to impose upon me.

CXLV.

To Mr. Justice Hyde.

Sept. 19, 1789.

You have given lady Jones great pleasure, by informing us, from so good authority, that a ship is arrived from England: she presents you with her best compliments.

Most readily shall I acquiesce in any alleviation of Horrebow's* misery, that you and sir Robert Chambers shall think just and legal. I have not one law book with me; nor, if I had many, should I perfectly know where to look for a mitigation by the court, of a sentence, which they pronounced, after full consideration of all its probable effects on the person condemned. I much doubt, whether

* This man, a foreigner, commanding a vessel trading to Bengal, was convicted before the supreme court of judicature, of purchasing the children of natives, for the purpose of carrying them out of the country, and selling them as slaves. It was the first instance of an attempt of this kind; and he was prosecuted by order of the government of Bengal.

it can legally be done ; nor do I think the petition states any urgent reasons for it. First, he mentions losses already sustained, (not therefore to be prevented by his enlargement) and, in my opinion, they cannot easily be more than he deserves. Next, his wife's health may have been injured by his disgrace, and may not be restored by our shortening the time of his confinement, which, if I remember, is almost half expired, and was as short as justice, tempered with lenity, would allow. His own health is not said to be affected by the imprisonment in such a place, at such a season ; for if it were proved that he were dangerously ill, we might, I suppose, remove him to a healthier place, or even let him go to sea, if able surgeons swore, that, in their serious opinion, nothing else could save his life. That is by no means the case ; and I confess, I have no compassion for him ; my compassion is for the enslaved children and their parents. Nevertheless, I know the benevolence of your heart, and shall approve whatever you and sir R. C. may do, if any precedent can be found or recollected of a power in the court to do what is now prayed.

I am, &c.

CXLVI.

From Prince Adam Czartoryski.

Sept. 20, 1788.

IT is but a fortnight ago since the gentleman, to whom the most flattering proof of your kind remembrance was committed, delivered it into my hand : I received it with a joined sentiment of gratitude and of vanity. It will be an easy task for you to find out why I am grateful ; and every body, but yourself, will soon hit upon the reasons why your having thought of me makes me vain.

The letter, the idea of the man who wrote it, the place from whence it came, the language of Hafez—all that put together, set my imagination at once in a blaze, and wafted me over in a wish from the Pole to the Indies : it has awakened a train of ideas, which lay dormant for a while ; and rekindled my somewhat forgotten heat for the Oriental Muses, which is not, however, to be put on the account of inconstancy, but to my having been crossed in my love for them, very near as much as sir Roger de Coverly is said to have been, in his addresses to his unkind widow. The war, broke out of late, deprived me of my last resource,

which was a dervish native of Samarcand, who was just come to live with me in the capacity of *munshi*: his religious zeal would not allow him to continue out of sight of the Sangiale Sheriff; so he hastened back to his brethren. After the reception of your letter, I grieved still more in seeing myself deprived of proper and easy means to cultivate so interesting a branch of learning, and could not forbear casting an impatient reflection on that warlike spirit, whose influence leaves nothing happy, nothing undisturbed. The acquisition of a language will always appear to me much more valuable than that of a desert. The sudden departure of my dervish has, I find, soured my temper against conquest and conquerors. I wished it was in my power to sweeten it again by the charms of your intercourse, under the benign influence of the climate you inhabit. How happy should I think myself in the enjoyment of your leisure hours, in perusing a country where every object is worth dwelling upon; in paying a visit to the rajah of Kisnagoor, with a letter of recommendation from your hand! But whilst, with a heated fancy, I am expatiating on those delightful subjects, I find myself, in reality, circling in a round of things as little suiting with my inclination, as the roughness of the heaven does with my constitution; for, *quid frigore Sarmatico pejus?* which becomes still more intolerable, if you add to it, the *in arcto et inglorius labor*, to which we are unfortunately doomed. I cannot finish this letter, without repeating to you the warmest acknowledgment of your kind remembrance. I shall be certain to pre-

serve it for ever, if the highest degree of esteem for your eminent qualities and talents, and the most sincere regard for your person, are sufficient titles to insure it. I am, invariably, &c.

CXLVII.

To Sir Joseph Banks.

DEAR SIR JOSEPH,

Sept. 17, 1789.

THE season for paying my annual epistolary rents being returned with the rough gales of the autumnal equinox, I am eager to offer my tribute where it is most due, to my best landlord—who, instead of claiming, like the India company, sixteen shillings in the pound for the neat profits of my farm (I speak correctly, though metaphorically), voluntarily offers me indulgences, even if I should run in arrears.

You have received, I trust, the pods of the finest Dacca cotton, with which the commercial resident at that station supplied me, and which I sent by different conveyances, some enclosed to yourself, some to sir George Young, and some by private hands: but I have always found it safer to send letters and small parcels by the public packet, than by careless and inconsiderate individuals. I am not partial to the *pryangu*, which I now find is its true

name ; but Mr. Shore found benefit from it, and procured the fresh plants from Arracan, which died un- luckily in their way to Calcutta. But seriously, it deserves a longer trial, before its tonic virtues, if it have any, can be ascertained. It is certainly not so fine a bitter as camomile or columbo root.

I wish politics at the devil, but hope that when the king recovered, science revived. It gives me great pain to know, that party, as it is called, (I call it faction ; because I hold party to be grounded on principles, and faction on self-interest, which excludes all principle) has found its way into a literary club, who meet reciprocally to impart and receive new ideas. I have deep-rooted political principles, which the law taught me ; but I should never think of introducing them among men of science : and if, on my return to Europe ten or twelve years hence, I should not find more science than politics in the club, my seat in it will be at the service of any politician who may wish to be one of the party.

An intimate friend of Mr. Blane has written to him, at my request, for the newly-discovered fragrant grass ; and should the plants be sent before the last ships of the season sail, they shall be sent to you. Whether they be the nard of the ancients, I must doubt, because we have sweet grasses here of innumerable species ; and Reuben Burrow brought me an odoriferous grass from the place where the Ganges enters India, and where it covers whole acres, and perfumes the whole country. From his account of it, I suspect it to be Mr. Blane's ; but I could make nothing of the dry speci-

mens, except that they differed widely from the Jatamansi, which I am persuaded is the Indian nard of Ptolemy. I can only procure the dry Jatamansi; but, if I can get the stalks, roots, and flowers from Butan, I will send them to you. Since the death of Kœnig, we are in great want of a professed botanist. I have twice read with rapture the *Philosophia Botanica*, and have Murray's edition of the *Genera et Species Plantarum* always with me; but, as I am no lynx, like Linnæus, I cannot examine minute blossoms—especially those of grasses.

We are far advanced in the second volume of our Transactions.

CXLVIII.

To John Wilmot, Esq.

Sept. 20, 1789.

EVERY sentence in your letter gave me great pleasure, and particularly the pleasing and just account of your truly venerable father. Lady Jones, after the first pang for the loss of hers, resigned herself with true piety to the will of God: she is very weak, and always ill during the heats. I have been, ever since my seasoning, as they call it, perfectly well, notwithstanding incessant business seven hours in a day, for four or five months in a year, and unremitted application, during the vacations, to a vast and interesting study—a complete knowledge of In-

dia—which I can only attain in the country itself : and I do not mean to stay in the country longer than the last year of the eighteenth century. I rejoice that the king is well ; but take no interest in the contests of your aristocratical factions. The time never was, when I would have enlisted under the banners of any faction ; though I might have carried a pair of colours, if I had not spurned them, in either legion. My party is that of the whole people, and my principles, which the law taught me, are only to be changed by a change of existence.

CXLIX.

To Mr. Justice Hyde.

Oct. 20, 1789.

THOUGH I hope, my dear sir, to be with you almost as soon as this letter ; yet I write it because it is the last that I shall write to any one for the next eleven months ; and I feel so light, after the completion of my severe epistolary task, that I am disposed to play a voluntary. I have answered fifty very long letters from Europe, and a multitude of short ones ; among the rest, I had one from the chief baron, who desires his remembrance to you, by the title of his old and worthy friend : another from Master Wilmot, informs me that his father, sir Eardley, had nearly ended his eightieth year, with as good health,

and as clear intellects, as he ever had in the prime of life. When I express a hope of seeing you in two or three days, it is only a hope ; for I shall affront the mandarin at Chinsura,* if I do not make my annual visit to him : now I can only visit him at night ; and the wind and tide may delay me, as they did last year. In all events, I shall be with you, if I live, before the end of the week, as I am preparing to go on board my pinnace. Besides my annuities of Europe letters, which I pay at this season, I have been winding up all the odds and ends of all my private or literary concerns, and shall think of nothing, for eleven months to come, but law, European or Indian. I have written four papers for our expiring Society, on very curious subjects, and have prepared materials for a discourse on the Chinese : the society is a puny, rickety child, and must be fed with pap ; nor shall it die by my fault ; but die it must, for I cannot alone support it. In my youthful days, I was always ready to join in a dance or a concert ; but I could never bring myself to dance a solitary hornpipe, or to play a solo. When I see Titsingh, (who, by the way, will never write any thing for us as long as his own Batavian society subsists) I will procure full information concerning the pincushion rice, and will report it to you. Lady Jones is as usual, and sends her best remembrance. I, too, am as usual, and as ever,

Dear sir, your faithful, &c.

WILLIAM JONES.

* Mr. Titsingh, governor of Chinsura.

CL.

To J. Shore, Esq.

Oct. 20, 1789.

YOUR approbation of *Sacontala*,* gives, at least, as much pleasure to the translator as you had from the perusal of it, and would encourage me to translate more dramas, if I were not resolved to devote all my time to law, European and Indian.

The idea of your happiness (and few men have a brighter prospect of it than yourself) reconciles me to our approaching separation, though it must be very long: for I will not see England, while the interested factions, which distract it, leave the legislature no time for the great operations which are essential for public felicity; while patriotic virtues are derided as visionary; and while the rancour of contending parties fills with thorns those particular societies, in which I hoped to gather nothing but roses. I am sorry (for the metaphor brings to my mind the *Bostani Kheiyal*†) that the garden of fancy should have as many weeds as that

* The Indian drama of *Sacontala*, or the Fatal Ring, translated by sir W. Jones.—See his Works, vol. ix.

† The Garden of Fancy; the title of an Eastern romance in Persian, in sixteen quarto volumes.

of politics. Serajélhak pronounced it, with emphasis, a wonderful work; and a young Mussulman assured me, that it comprised all the finest inventions of India and Persia. The work will probably mend as it proceeds.

We must spare ourselves the pain of taking a formal leave: so farewell. May you live happy in a free country!

I am, &c.

* * * * *

CLI.

*From Baron Reviczki.**

London, June 30, 1789.

By the Vestal frigate, which was to convey lord Cathcart to China, I wrote an answer to your elegant Persian letter, which I received through Mr. Elmsley: it was a most agreeable proof to me, that I was still honoured with a place in your remembrance, notwithstanding the distance which separates us. I have since learned, that colonel Cathcart died on the voyage; and as the Vestal, in consequence of this event, returned to England, I am

* Written in French.

not without apprehension, that my letter never reached you. I have since received a most superb work, printed at Calcutta, and which would do honour to the first printing-office in Europe, accompanied with an elegant and obliging letter. I recognised in it the hand of a skilful penman, if I may be allowed to judge ; for I have so long neglected the cultivation of Oriental literature, that I am almost as much a stranger to it as if I had never learned it. I have never yet seen so elegant a specimen of Oriental typography, as that in the Persian poem with which you favoured me.

I cannot express how much I regret the loss of your society during my residence in London, which would have afforded me so much gratification ; and I doubt if I shall have an opportunity of enjoying it after your return, as I must soon enter upon the new office conferred upon me by the emperor, of minister at Naples. But whatever my destination may be, of this you may be assured—that neither absence nor distance will ever weaken my attachment to you ; and that, during life, I shall consider myself equally bound by gratitude and inclination to preserve it.

I am, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

COUNT REVICZKI.

CLII.

To Dr. Price.

MY DEAR SIR, Crishna-nagur, Sept. 14, 1790.

I GIVE you my warmest thanks for your friendly letter, and acceptable present of an admirable discourse, which I have read with great delight. * * *
—We have twenty millions (I speak with good information) of Indian subjects, whose laws I am now compiling and arranging, in the hope of securing their property to themselves and their heirs : they are pleased with the work ; but it makes me a very bad correspondent. I had flattered myself with a hope of making a visit to our venerable friend at Philadelphia, before the retreat which I meditate to my humble cottage in Middlesex ; but God's will be done ! We shall meet, I devoutly hope, in a happier state.

CLIII.

*To the Rev. Dr. Ford.**

Crishna-nagur, Oct. 11, 1790.

THOUGH I am, for the best of reasons, the worst of correspondents, yet I will no longer delay to thank you for your friendly letter of the fourth of February, and for your kind attentions to colonel Polier. You have a much better correspondent in Mr. Langlas, whose patriotism, I hope, will succeed, and whose Persian literature will be a source of delight to him, if not to the public. Mr. Wehl's favour never reached me, or I would have answered it immediately, and I request you to inform him of my disappointment. The chances are about three to one against your receiving this ; and the fear of writing for the sport of winds and waves, disheartens me whenever I take up a pen.

* Principal of Magdalen Hall, Oxford.

CLIV.

To William Shipley, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

Crishna-nagur, Oct. 11, 1790.

THE ships which brought your kind letters, arrived so near the end of my short vacation, that I have but just time to thank you for them, as I do most heartily, as well as for your acceptable presents. Anna Maria has recovered from the pang which the sad intelligence from England gave her, and a pious resignation has succeeded to her natural anguish. You are, I hope, quite recovered from your illness, and again promoting the welfare and convenience of mankind, by your judicious exertions and ingenious inventions, to which all possible attention shall be shown in this country. May you very long enjoy the pleasure of doing good, which is, I well know, the only reward you seek !—It is now settled here, that the natives are proprietors of their land, and that it shall descend by their own laws. I am engaged in superintending a complete system of Indian laws ; but the work is vast, difficult, and delicate : it occupies all my leisure, and makes me the worst of correspondents. I trust, however, that long letters are not necessary to convince you that

I am, &c.

CLV.

*To Mrs. Sloper.**

Crishna-nagur, Oct. 13, 1790.

I DESERVE no thanks for the attentions which it is both my duty and my delight to show our beloved Anna; but you deserve, and I beg you to accept, my warmest thanks for your entertaining letter, for your frequent kind remembrance of me, and for your acceptable present of a snuff-box in the most elegant taste. All that you write concerning our friends, is highly interesting to me; and all pleasing, except the contents of your last page: but the most agreeable part of your letter is the hope which you express, that the Bath waters would restore you to health: and it gives me infinite pleasure to know that your hope has been realised. Anna will give you a full account of herself, and will mention some of the many reasons that make me a bad correspondent. I thank you for Erskine's speech; but I was myself an advocate so long, that I never mind what advocates say, but what they prove; and I can only examine proofs in causes

* Sister to lady Jones, and married to William Charles Sloper, Esq.

brought before me. I knew you would receive, with your usual good-nature, my saucy jests about your hand-writing, but hope you will write to me as you write to Anna; for you know, the more any character resembles pot-hooks, &c. the better I can read it. My love to Amelia, and to all whom you love, which would give them a claim, if they had no other, to the affection of, my dear madam,

Your ever faithful,

WILLIAM JONES.

CLVI.

To Sir John Macpherson, Bart.

Crishna-nagur, Oct. 15, 1790.

I GIVE you hearty thanks for your postscript, which (as you enjoin secrecy) I will allude to ambiguously, lest this letter should fall into other hands than yours. Be assured, that what I am going to say, does not proceed from an imperfect sense of your kindness; but really I want no addition to my fortune, which is enough for me; and if the whole legislature of Britain were to offer me a different station from that which I now fill, I should most gratefully and respectfully decline it. The character of an ambitious judge is, in my opinion, very dangerous to public justice; and if I were a sole legislator, it should be enacted, that every judge, as

well as every bishop, should remain for life in the place which he first accepted : this is not the language of a cynic, but of a man who loves his friends, his country, and mankind ; who knows the short duration of human life, recollects that he has lived four and forty years, and has learned to be contented. Of public affairs, you will receive better intelligence than I am able to give you. My private life is similar to that which you remember ; seven hours a day, on an average, are occupied by my duties as a magistrate, and one hour to the new Indian digest ; for one hour in the evening, I read aloud to lady Jones. We are now travelling to the sources of the Nile with Mr. Bruce, whose work is very interesting and important. The second volume of the Asiatic Transactions is printed, and the third ready for the press. I jabber Sanscrit every day with the pundits, and hope, before I leave India, to understand it as well as I do Latin. Among my letters, I find one directed to you ; I have unsealed it, and though it only shows that I was not inattentive to the note with which you favoured me on the eve of your departure, yet I annex it, because it was yours, though brought back by my servant.

The latter part of it will raise melancholy ideas ; but death, if we look at it firmly, is only a change of place : every departure of a friend is a sort of death ; and we are all continually dying and reviving. We shall all meet : I hope to meet you again in India ; but, wherever we meet, I expect to see you well and happy. None of your friends can wish for your health and happiness more ardently than, my dear sir, &c.

CLVII.

To R. Morris, Esq.

Calcutta, Oct. 30, 1790.

WHEN your letter arrived, I had begun my judicial campaign, and am so busy, I can only answer it very shortly. Lady J. and myself are sincerely rejoiced, that you have so good an establishment in so fine a country. Need I say, that it would give me infinite delight to promote your views? As far as I can, I will promote them; but though I have a very extensive acquaintance, I neither have, nor can have, influence; I can only approve and recommend, and do my best to circulate your proposals. We are equally obliged to you for your kind invitation, as if we had it in our power to accept it; but I fear we cannot leave Calcutta long enough to revisit your Indian Montpelier. As one of the Cymro-dorians, I am warmly interested in British antiquities and literature; but my honour is pledged for the completion of the new digest of Hindu laws, and I have not a moment to spare for any other study.

CLVIII.

To Sir J. Sinclair, Bart. Whitehall.

Crishna-nagur, Oct. 15, 1791.

You may rely upon my best endeavours to procure information concerning the Asiatic wool, or soft hair; and the animals that carry it. I had the pleasure of circulating your very interesting tracts at Calcutta, and of exhibiting the specimens of very beautiful wool, with which you favoured me. My own time, however, is engaged from morning to night in discharging my public duties, and in arranging the new digest of Indian laws: I must therefore depend chiefly on others, in procuring the information you are desirous of obtaining. Mr. Bebb, of the board of trade, and colonel Kyd, who superintends the Company's garden, have promised to assist me. The wool of these provinces is too coarse to be of use: but that of Kerman in Persia, which you know by the name of *Carmanian* wool, is reckoned exquisitely fine; and you might, I suppose, procure the sheep from Bombay. The shawl goats would live, I imagine, and breed, in England; but it is no less difficult to procure the females from Cashmir, than to procure mares from Arabia. When you see Mr. Richardson, do me the favour to give him my best thanks for the parcel which he sent me, by desire of the Highland Society.

CLIX.

To George Hardinge, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR, Crishna-nagur, Oct. 16, 1791.

IF the warmth of hearts were measured by the frequency of letters, my heart must be thought the coldest in the world: but you, I am confident, will never apply so fallacious a thermometer. In serious truth, I am, and must be, the worst of correspondents for the following reasons among a hundred; a strong glare and weak eyes, long tasks and short day-light, confinement in court six hours a day, and in my chambers three or four, not to mention casual interruptions and engagements.—You spoke so lightly of your complaint, that I thought it must be transient; and should have been extremely grieved, if, in the very moment when I heard you had been seriously ill, I had not heard of your recovery.

Anna Maria has promised me to sail for Europe in January, 1793; and I will follow her, when I can live as well in England on my private fortune, as I can do here on half my salary. * * *

I cannot but like your sonnets, yet wish you would abstain from politics, which add very little to the graces of poetry.

CLX.

To Sir Joseph Banks.

Crishna-nagur, Oct. 18, 1791.

I THANK you heartily for your kind letters, but perhaps I cannot express my thanks better than by answering them as exactly as I am able.

First, as to sending plants from India, I beg you to accept my excuses, and to make them to sir George Young, for my apparent inattention to such commissions. In short, if you wish to transfer our Indian plants to the Western islands, the Company must direct Kyd and Roxburgh to send them, and their own captains to receive them, and attend to them.

We are in sad want of a travelling botanist, with some share of my poor friend Koenig's knowledge and zeal. A stationary botanist would fix on the indigo-fera, as the chief object of his care. Roxburgh will do much on the coast, if he can be relieved from his terrible head-aches; but here we have no assistance.

I have neither eyes nor time for a botanist; yet, with lady Jones's assistance, I am continually advancing; and we have examined about 170 Linnæan genera. She brought home, a morning or two ago,

the most lovely *epidendrum* that ever was seen, but the description of it would take up too much room in a letter; it grew on a lofty *amra*, but it is an air plant, and puts forth its fragrant enamelled blossoms in a pot without earth or water: none of the many species of Linnæus corresponds exactly with it. You must not imagine that, because I am, and shall be, saucy about the Linnæan language, that I have not the highest veneration for its great author; but I think his diction barbarous and pedantic, particularly in his *Philosophia Botanica*, which I have a right to criticise, having read it three times with equal attention and pleasure. Had Van Rheeде exhibited the Sanscrit names with accuracy, we should not be puzzled with reading the Indian poems and medical tracts; but in all his twelve volumes, I have not found above ten or twelve names correctly expressed, either in Sanscrit or Arabic. I shall touch again on botany, but I proceed with your first letter. I have little knowledge of Yacob Bruce; but his five volumes, which I read aloud, (except some passages which I could only read with my eyes) are so entertaining, that I wished for five more; and readily forgave, not only his mistakes in the botanical language, and in Arabic, but even his arrogance, which he carries *extra flammantia mœnia mundi*.

Keir's paper on distilling I never saw in print, though I must have heard it read by our secretary; but as the worthy author of it is in London, where probably you will have met him, he will satisfy you on the subject.

The *madhuca* is, beyond a doubt, the *bassia*; but I can safely assert, that not one of fifty blossoms

which I had examined, had 16 filaments, 8 above the throat, and 8 within the tube. That Kœnig, whom I knew to be very accurate, had seen such a character, I doubt not; but he should not have set it down as constant. I frequently saw 26 and 28 filaments, sometimes 12, and the average was about 20 or 22. By the way, my excellent friend, you will do us a capital service, either by printing Kœnig's manuscripts, or by sending us a copy of them; and we will send you, in return, not only the correct Sanscrit names, but the plants themselves, at least the seeds, if you can prevail on any captain to take care of them. * * * * *

That the poem of Calidas* entertained you, gives me great pleasure; but it diverts me extremely, to hear from others, that the authenticity of the poem is doubted in England; but I am not sure that my own errors of inattention may not have occasioned mistakes. The use of the pollen in flowers is, I believe, well known to the Brahmans: but I am not sure, that I have not added the epithet *prolific*, to distinguish it from common dust, which would have been the exact version of *renu*. The blue *nymphæa*, which I have sound reasons for believing the *lotus* of Egypt, is a native of Upper India; here we have only the white and rose-coloured. *Filament* is not used as a botanical word, but merely as a thread; and the filaments for the bracelet are drawn from the stalk of the *nymphæa*. The *hart*, properly so called, may not be a native of Bengal; but Calidas lived at Ugein, and lays his scene near the northern mountains: all the rest is clear;

* Sacontala, or the Fatal Ring.

bears and boars, and all wild beasts, have been hunted here immemorially. The *cocila* sings charmingly here in the spring; Polier will show you drawings of the male and female, but will, perhaps, call it *co-il*: the story of its eggs always struck me as very remarkable. The *amra* is *mangifera*; the *mellica*, I believe *nyctanthes zambak*; the *madhavi creeper*, *banisteria*. The *ensa*, I cannot see in blossom. The *swisha* is *mimosa odoratissima*; the *pippála*, *ficus religiosa*. If I recollect *lacsha*, it is not a plant, but *lac*. *Vana dosini* is a Sanscrit epithet of the *banisteria*. As to nard, I know not what to say: if the Greeks meant only fragrant grass, we have nards in abundance, *acorus*, *schoenus*, *andropogon*, *cyperus*, &c.: but I have no evidence that they meant any such thing. On Arrian, or rather on Aristobulus, we cannot safely rely, as they place cinnamon in Arabia, and myrrh in Persia. Should any travelling botanist find the species of *andropogon*, mentioned by Dr. Blane, in the plains of Gedrosia, it would be some evidence; but would, at the same time, prove that it was not the Indian nard, which never was supposed to grow in Persia. As at present advised, I believe the Indian nard of the ancients to have been a valerian; at least the nard of Ptolemy, which is brought from the very country mentioned by him as famed for the spike-nard.

And now, my dear sir Joseph, I have gone through both your letters: I am, for many good reasons, a bad correspondent; but principally because the discharge of my public duties leaves me no more time than is sufficient for necessary refreshments and relaxation.

The last twenty years of my life I shall spend, I trust, in a studious retreat; and if you know of a pleasant country house to be disposed of in your part of Middlesex, with pasture-ground for my cattle, and garden ground enough for my amusement, have the goodness to inform me of it. I shall be happy in being your neighbour; and though I write little now, will talk then as much as you please.

I believe I shall send a box of inestimable manuscripts, Sanscrit and Arabic, to your friendly care. If I return to England, you will restore them to me; if I die in my voyage to China, or my journey through Persia, you will dispose of them as you please.* Wherever I may die, I shall be, while I live, my dear sir, &c.

CLXI.

To Warren Hastings, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR, Crishna-nagur, Oct. 20, 1791.

BEFORE you can receive this, you will, I doubt not, have obtained a complete triumph over your persecutors; and your character will have risen, not brighter indeed, but more conspicuously bright,

* The MSS. here alluded to, together with a large collection of Eastern MSS. were presented to the Royal Society, by lady Jones, after the death of sir William.

from the furnace of their persecution. Happy should I be if I could congratulate you in person on your victory; but, though I have a fortune in England, which might satisfy a man of letters, yet I have not enough to establish that absolute independence, which has been the chief end and aim of my life; and I must stay in this country a few years longer: Lady Jones has, however, promised me to take her passage for Europe in January, 1793, and I will follow her when I can: she is pretty well, and presents her kindest remembrance to you and Mrs. Hastings, whom I thank most heartily for a very obliging and elegant letter. My own health has, by God's blessing, been very firm, but my eyes are weak, and I have constantly employed them eight or nine hours a day. My principal amusement is botany, and the conversation of the pundits, with whom I talk fluently in the language of the *Gods*; and my business, besides the discharge of my public duties, is the translation of Menu, and of the digest which has been compiled at my instance. Our Society still subsists, and the third volume of their Transactions is so far advanced, that it will certainly be published next season. Samuel Davis has translated the *Surya Siddhanta*, and is making discoveries in Indian astronomy; while Wilford is pursuing his geographical inquiries at Benares, and has found, or thinks he has found, an account of Africa and Europe, and even of Britain by name, in the Scanda Puran: he has sent us a chart of the Nile from Sanscrit authorities, and I expect soon to receive his proofs and illustrations. Of public affairs in India, I say little, because I can say nothing with certainty: the

seasons and elements have been adverse to us in Mysore. Farewell, my dear sir, and believe me to be, with unfeigned regard, your faithful and obedient

WILLIAM JONES.

CLXII.

To Sir Joseph Banks.

Calcutta, Nov. 19, 1791.

SINCE I sent my letter to the packet of the Queen, I received the enclosed from a Hindu of my acquaintance ; and I send his *cusha* flowers, which I have not eyes to examine, especially in a season of business : the leaves are very long, with a point excessively long and fine ; their edges are rough downwards ; in other respects smooth. As this plant is, to my knowledge, celebrated in the Veda, I am very desirous of knowing its Linnæan name. I cannot find it in Van Rheede.

CLXIII.

*To J. Shore, Esq.**

MY DEAR SIR,

A FEW days after I troubled you about the yacht, I felt a severe pang on hearing of your domestic misfortune : and I felt more for you than I should for most men, on so melancholy an occasion, because I well know the sensibility of your heart. The only topic of consolation happily presented itself to you : reason perhaps might convince us, that the death of a created being never happens without the will of the Creator, who governs this world by a special interposition of his providential care ; but as this is a truth which Revelation expressly teaches us, our only true comfort in affliction must be derived from Christian philosophy, which is so far from encouraging us to stifle our natural feelings, that even the divine Author of it wept on the death of a friend.—This doctrine, though superfluous to you, is always present to my mind ; and I shall have occasion, in a few years, by the course of nature, to press it on the mind of Lady Jones, the great age of whose mother is one of my reasons for hoping most anxiously, that nothing may prevent her returning

* Written in the autumn of 1793, about two months before the departure of lady Jones from India.

to England this season. * * *

I will follow her as soon as I can, possibly at the beginning of 1795, but probably not till the season after that; for although I shall have more than enough to supply all the wants of a man, who would rather have been Cincinnatus with his plough, than Lucullus with all his wealth—yet I wish to complete the system of Indian laws while I remain in India, because I wish to perform whatever I promise, with the least possible imperfection; and, in so difficult a work, doubts might arise, which the pundits alone can remove. You continue, I hope, to find the gardens healthy: nothing can be more pleasant than the house in which we live; but it might justly be called the temple of the winds, especially as it has an octagonal form, like that erected at Athens to those boisterous divinities: I cannot get rid of the rheumatism which their keen breath has given me, and submit, with reluctance, to the necessity of wrapping myself in shawls and flannel. We continue to be charmed with the perspicuity, moderation, and eloquence of Filangieri.

Of European politics I think as little as possible; not because they do not interest my heart, but because they give me too much pain. I have “good will towards men, and wish peace on earth;” but I see chiefly under the sun, the two classes of men whom Solomon describes—the oppressor and the oppressed. I have no fear, in England, of open despotism, nor of anarchy. I shall cultivate my fields and gardens, and think as little as possible of monarchs or oligarchs. I am, &c.

The few months allotted to the existence of sir W. Jones, after the departure of his wife, were almost wholly devoted

FARTHER OBSERVATIONS ON THE PIETY OF
SIR WILLIAM JONES.

THE friends of religion, who know the value of the "sure and certain hopes" which it inspires, will remark, with satisfaction, the pious sentiments expressed by sir William Jones a few months only before his own death. In youth, he had determined to examine, with attention, the evidence of our holy religion; and unprejudiced inquiry terminated, as might be expected, in a rational conviction of its truth and divine authority.

Of this conviction, his publications (though none of them were professedly religious) afford ample and indubitable testimony; and it will not be deemed a superfluous task to select from them, and from other materials, his opinions on so important a subject.

Amongst the papers written by sir William Jones, was found the following prayer, composed by him

to the completion of the digest of Hindu and Mohammedan law: but on the evening of the 20th of April, 1794, after prolonging his walk to a late hour, he complained of aguish symptoms; but had no suspicion, at that time, of the real nature of his indisposition, which proved to be an inflammation of the liver: the progress of the complaint was uncommonly rapid, and terminated fatally on the 27th of April, when he expired, without a pang or groan.

on the first day of the year 1782; about fifteen months before his embarkation for India, and more than twelve years before his death :

A Prayer.

Jan. 1, 1782.

ETERNAL and Incomprehensible Mind, who, by thy boundless power, before time began, createdst innumerable worlds for thy glory, and innumerable orders of beings for their happiness, which thy infinite goodness prompted thee to desire, and thy infinite wisdom enabled thee to know : we, thy creatures, vanish into nothing before thy Supreme Majesty : we hourly feel our weakness ; we daily bewail our vices ; we continually acknowledge our folly : thee only we adore with awful veneration ; thee we thank with the most fervent zeal ; thee we praise with astonishment and rapture : to thy power we humbly submit ; of thy goodness we devoutly implore protection ; on thy wisdom we firmly and cheerfully rely. We do but open our eyes, and instantly we perceive thy divine existence ; we do but exert our reason, and in a moment we discover thy divine attributes : but our eyes could not behold thy splendour, nor could our minds comprehend thy divine essence ; we see thee only through thy stupendous and all-perfect works ; we know thee only by that ray of sacred light, which it has pleased thee to reveal : nevertheless, if creatures, too ignorant to conceive, and too depraved to pursue, the means of their own happiness, may, without presumption, express their wants to their Creator—let us humbly supplicate thee to remove from us that

evil, which thou hast permitted for a time to exist, that the ultimate good of all may be complete ; and to secure us from that vice, which thou sufferest to spread snares around us, that the triumph of virtue may be more conspicuous. Irradiate our minds with all useful truth ; instil into our hearts a spirit of general benevolence : give understanding to the foolish ; meekness to the proud ; temperance to the dissolute ; fortitude to the feeble-hearted ; hope to the desponding ; faith to the unbelieving ; diligence to the slothful ; patience to those who are in pain ; and thy celestial aid to those who are in danger : comfort the afflicted ; relieve the distressed ; supply the hungry with salutary food, and the thirsty with a plentiful stream. Impute not our doubts to indifference, nor our slowness of belief to hardness of heart ; but be indulgent to our imperfect nature, and supply our imperfections by thy heavenly favour. “ Suffer not, we anxiously pray, suffer not oppression to prevail over innocence, nor the might of the avenger over the weakness of the just.” Whenever we address thee in our retirement from the vanities of the world, if our prayers are foolish, pity us ; if presumptuous, pardon us ; if acceptable to thee, grant them, all-powerful God, grant them : and, as with our living voice, and with our dying lips, we will express our submission to thy decrees, adore thy providence, and bless thy dispensations ; so, in all future states, to which we reverently hope thy goodness will raise us, grant that we may continue praising, admiring, venerating, worshipping thee more and more, through worlds without number, and ages without end !

Long before this prayer was written, sir William Jones had demonstrated, to his own satisfaction, that Jesus was the Messiah, predicted by the prophets.* Amongst his projected occupations in India, one was to translate the Psalms into Persic, and the Gospel of Luke into Arabic—a design which could only have originated in his conviction of the importance and inspiration of these divine books; and, in the year after the date of the prayer, we have a direct and public avowal of his belief in the

* In a Hebrew copy of the book of Hosea, lord Teignmouth found a series of propositions in the hand-writing of sir W. Jones, containing the sketch of a demonstration of the divine authority of the Christian religion. These propositions appear to have been written about the year 1769: they are not expressed with such accuracy or elegance, as to justify a supposition that they were intended to be made public; but they afford an evidence of his early conviction of the truth and completion of the prophecies respecting our Saviour.

PROPOSITION I.

There is as much reason to believe, that the writings of Isaiah and the Hebrew prophets, as that those of Homer and the Greek poets, are more ancient than the time of Jesus.

Objection. Some men might have an interest in forging Isaiah.

Answer. Forged writings would have been more in point: those of Isaiah bear no marks of forgery; and the Jews themselves, who were puzzled by them, acknowledged their antiquity.

PROPOSITION II.

These ancient writings, especially Isaiah, allude to some great event, and to some real extraordinary person, “who

divinity of our Saviour; * and again, in the next, another prayer by him, expressing his exclusive reliance on the merits of his Redeemer for his acceptance with God. †

In a Dissertation by sir William Jones on the Gods of Greece, Italy, and Rome, written in 1784, but revised and printed in 1786, the following passage occurs: "Disquisitions concerning the manners and conduct of our species, in early times, or indeed at any time, are always curious at least, and

was put to death, and complained not," &c.—*Isaiah*, chap. liii.

PROPOSITION III.

The life and death of Jesus, his virtues and doctrines, though not his miracles, are as much to be believed, as the life and death of Socrates, his virtues, and his doctrine.

PROPOSITION IV.

No person, in the history of the Jews, before or after Jesus, coincides with this account, except Jesus.

Therefore Jesus was the subject of their writings, which are consequently inspired; and he a person of an extraordinary nature, that is, the Messiah.

If this be just reasoning, we may believe his miracles, and must obey his law.

If difficulties occur, and we are asked, "How can they be solved?" we may safely answer, "We do not know;" yet we may truly be, and justly be called, Christians.

To these propositions the following note is subjoined: "What must be the importance of a book, of which it may be truly said, 'If this book be not true, the religion which we profess is false?'"

* See page 42 of this volume.

† See preceding observations on the piety of sir W. Jones, page 53.

amusing ; but they are highly interesting to such as can say of themselves, with Chremes in the play, ' We are men, and take an interest in all that relates to mankind.' They may even be of solid importance in an age, when some intelligent and virtuous persons are inclined to doubt the authenticity of accounts delivered by Moses, concerning the primitive world ; since no modes or sources of reasoning can be unimportant which have a tendency to remove such doubts. Either the first eleven chapters of Genesis (all due allowances being made for a figurative Eastern style) are true, or the whole fabric of our national religion is false ; a conclusion, which none of us, I trust, would wish to be drawn. I, who cannot help believing the divinity of the Messiah, from the undisputed antiquity, and manifest completion of many prophecies, especially those of Isaiah, in the only person recorded by history to whom they are applicable—am obliged, of course, to believe the sanctity of the venerable books, to which that sacred person refers as genuine ; but it is not the truth of our national religion, as such, that I have at heart ; it is truth itself : and if any cool, unbiassed reader will clearly convince me, that Moses drew his narrative, through Egyptian conduits, from the primeval fountains of Indian literature, I shall esteem him as a friend, for having weeded my mind from a capital error ; and promise to stand among the foremost in assisting to circulate the truth which he has ascertained. After such a declaration, I cannot but persuade myself, that no candid man will be displeased, if, in the course of my work, I make as free with any arguments that he may have advanced, as I should really desire him

to do with any of mine, that he may be disposed to controvert."

That any reasoner could convince him that Moses had borrowed his narrative from Indian sources, he never, for a moment, supposed; and, if a doubt could be entertained on this subject, another passage, in the same dissertation, must at once annihilate it. He had indeed no hesitation to acknowledge his persuasion, that a connexion subsisted between the old idolatrous nations of Egypt, India, Greece, and Italy, long before they migrated to their several settlements, and, consequently, before the birth of Moses; but he was equally persuaded, that the truth of the proposition could, in no degree, affect the veracity and sanctity of the Mosaic history, which, if any confirmation of it were necessary, it would rather tend to confirm.

"The divine legate," says he, "educated by the daughter of a king, and in all respects highly accomplished, could not but know the mythological system of Egypt, but he must have condemned the superstitions of that people, and despised the speculative absurdities of their priests, though some of their traditions, concerning the creation and the flood, were founded on truth. Who was better acquainted with the mythology of Athens than Socrates? Who more accurately versed in the rabbinical doctrines than Paul? Who possessed clearer ideas of all ancient astronomical systems than Newton? or of scholastic metaphysics than Locke? In whom could the Romish church have had a more formidable opponent than in Chillingworth, whose deep knowledge of its tenets rendered

him so competent to dispute them? In a word, who more exactly knew the abominable rites and shocking idolatry of Canaan than Moses himself? Yet the learning of those great men only incited them to seek other sources of truth, piety, and virtue, than those in which they had long been immersed. There is no shadow, then, of a foundation for an opinion, that Moses borrowed the first nine or ten chapters of Genesis from the literature of Egypt; still less can the adamantine pillars of our Christian faith be moved by the result of any debates on the comparative antiquity of the Hindus and Egyptians, or of any inquiries into the Indian theology."

The testimony of sir William Jones to the verity and authenticity of the Old and New Testaments is well known: lord Teignmouth transcribed it from his own manuscript in his Bible:

"I have carefully and regularly perused these Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion, that the volume, independently of its divine origin, contains more sublimity, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains of eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever language they may have been written."

This opinion is repeated, with little variation of expression, in a discourse addressed to the Asiatic Society at Calcutta, in February 1791:

"Theological inquiries are no part of my present subject; but I cannot refrain from adding, that the collection of tracts, which we call, from their excellence, the Scriptures, contain, independently of a divine origin, more true sublimity, more exquisite

beauty, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains both of poetry and eloquence, than could be collected within the same compass, from all other books that were ever composed in any age, or in any idiom. The two parts, of which the Scriptures consist, are connected by a chain of compositions, which bear no resemblance, in form or style, to any that can be produced from the stores of Grecian, Indian, Persian, or even Arabian learning : the antiquity of those compositions no man doubts ; and the unstrained application of them to events long subsequent to their publication, is a solid ground of belief, that they were genuine compositions, and consequently inspired. But if any thing be the absolute exclusive property of each individual, it is his belief ; and I hope I should be one of the last men living, who could harbour a thought of obtruding my own belief on the free minds of others."

In his next discourse he mentions the Mosaic history, under a supposition (assumed for the sake of the argument which he was discussing) that it had no higher authority than any other book of history, which the researches of the curious had accidentally brought to light.

"On this supposition," says he, "that the first eleven chapters of the book which it is thought proper to call Genesis, are merely a preface to the oldest civil history now extant, we see the truth of them confirmed by antecedent reasoning, and by evidence in part highly probable, and in part certain." But that no misconception might be entertained on this awful subject, by the ignorant, and to avoid the possibility of any perverse misapplication of his sentiments, he adds : "but the connexion

of the Mosaic history with that of the Gospel, by a chain of sublime predictions, unquestionably ancient, and apparently* fulfilled, must induce us to think the Hebrew narrative more than human in its origin, and, consequently, true in every substantial part of it; though possibly expressed in figurative language, as many learned and pious men have believed, and as the most pious may believe, without injury, and perhaps with advantage, to the cause of revealed religion."

In a discourse, in 1793, he mentions, with satisfaction, the result of the inquiries of the Society over which he presided.

"In the first place, we cannot surely deem it an inconsiderable advantage, that all our historical researches have confirmed the Mosaic accounts of the primitive world; and our testimony on that subject ought to have the greater weight, because, if the result of our observations had been totally different, we should nevertheless have published them—not indeed with equal pleasure, but with equal confidence: for truth is mighty, and, whatever be its consequences, must always prevail: but, independently of our interest in corroborating the multiplied evidences of revealed religion, we could scarcely gratify our minds with a more useful and rational entertainment, than the contemplation of those wonderful revolutions in kingdoms and states, which have happened within little more than four thousand years; revolutions, almost as fully demonstrative of an all-ruling Providence, as the structure of

* The word *apparently* was no doubt meant as synonymous with *clearly*, or *manifestly*.

the universe, and the final causes which are discernible in its whole extent, and even in its remotest parts."

The preceding sentiments, although they are such as would naturally occur to a believer in the Scriptures, were not necessarily called for by the subject under his discussion, and could only have proceeded from his zeal in the investigation and propagation of truth. This was the fixed object of his whole life, as he has himself declared in the following elegant couplets :

Before thy mystic altar, heavenly Truth,
I kneel in manhood, as I knelt in youth.
'Thus let me kneel, till this dull form decay,
And life's last shade be brighten'd by thy ray :
Then shall my soul, now lost in clouds below,
Soar without bound, without consuming glow.

THE following epitaph, evidently intended for himself, was written by sir William Jones, a short time before his decease : it displays resignation to the will of his Creator, and love and good-will to mankind.

AN EPITAPH.

Here was deposited
the mortal part of a man,
who feared God, but not death;
and maintained independence,
but sought not riches ;
Who thought
none below him, but the base and unjust,
none above him, but the wise and virtuous;
Who loved
his parents, kindred, friends, country,
with an ardour
which was the chief source of
all his pleasures and all his pains :
and who, having devoted
his life to their service,
and to
the improvement of his mind,
resigned it calmly,
giving glory to his Creator,
wishing peace on earth,
and with
good-will to all creatures,
on the [twenty-seventh] day of [April,]
in the year of our blessed Redeemer,
one thousand seven hundred [and ninety-four].

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Jones, William

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